

Mrs Jones Gift

A
GUIDE
TO
SCATTERED FLOCKS:
OR, A
Closet Companion
FOR
Such as want the Comfort and
Benefit of
Church-Communion.
WITH
A Particular Epistle to the Inha-
bitants of **POOL.**

*Pfal. 51. 12, 13. Restore unto me the joy of thy
salvation, and uphold me with thy free spirit.
Then will I teach transgressors thy ways, and
sinners shall be converted unto thee.*

L O N D O N,

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St. Paul's Church-yard, 1684.

By Samuel Torrey

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R. B. Dickinson Cat. 1 # 696 Oct 1925 4/6 (LH)

To the READER.

Courteous Reader,

WHEN our Blessed Saviour saw the Multitudes of People, that were like Sheep scattered and wandring, having no shepherd to keep them; the Evangelist saith, *ἰσπλαγχνίσθη ὡς αὐτῶν*, He pitied them from his very bowels, and out of his tender compassion charged his Disciples to pray to the Lord for them; *Matt. 9. 36. Let the same mind be in us which was in Christ Jesus*, *Phil. 2. 5.* It was this Motive moved me to undertake this Work: though many others are furnished with more abilities, yet I may challenge any man to have more bowels of compassion toward you, than my self; or a more deep sense of the Judgment of God in this Dispensation. *Through the wrath of the Lord of Hosts the land is darkned*, *Isa. 9. 19.* I have aimed at perspicuity and brevity, and to suit the stile to your condition, which calls not for the flourishes of a wanton Eloquence to please a lofty Spirit: but right words to affect your Hearts, to make you pity your selves, and be humbled. Say as the Prophet teacheth the People of Israel to say, in another case, *Who gave Jacob for a spoil, and Israel to the robbers? Did not the Lord, he against whom we have sinned?* *Isa. 47. 4.* Peruse the following Treatise, for the improvement of it. The Lord make it serviceable and useful to your Spiritual Edification in Christ.

An Epistle to the Inhabitants of the Town and County of *Pool*.

It is sad to observe, the most diligent and faithful Labourers in the Lords Vineyard, labour under the greatest Discouragements; they are the Subjects of the Prophane Wits, and the Marks of the Malicious, daily wounded with Reproaches; Sharp Arrows flye against some of them, as if they were really such, as the unjust Slanders of Malicious men falsly paint them. Whither this will lead, and what it doth presage, I tremble to consider: yet all these growing discouragements, I am fully perswaded, will never exceed nor equal the admirable comforts and supports which God shall give to all that walk before him with a perfect heart, to make either Minister, or people sink under them. He that is faithful, hath promis'd, not to suffer you to be tempted above what (through grace) you are able to bear, and to give a happy issue out of it, 1 Cor. 10. 13. We may take notice in the general Providence of God over Mankind, that as man is born unto trouble, he gives to all men some outward human comforts as a Cordial against their many great Miseries, that their Life may not be a Hell to them; they have some delights which make them still desirous to live, though racked with Pains and consumed with Diseases; till those are taken away, they cannot say, they have no more content in their lives. How much more admirable Comforts and Supports, hath he provided for his peculiar people, that they rejoyce with
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joy unspeakable and full of glory, in their outward Miseries, though all human supports and delights fail them? Their Peace with God, and comforts in Communion with him, will enable them to glory in tribulation, Rom. 5 1, 3. As we see some Herbs and Trees flourish and blossom in Winter, when all others are dried and wither'd; so shall the godly be made flourishing, and faithful; chearful, and fruitful; though Hypocrites, and the temporary Believers (those Embrio's in whom Grace is not fully form'd, and rooted in the heart) shall fall like Leaves in Autumn, when Tribulations and Persecutions arise, Matt. 13. 21.

The sad dispensation which you labour under, hath moved my very Bowels to write this, to stir up the grace that is in you to bear it patiently, to improve it gloriously, and to continue steadfast in the ways of God, and in the hope of the Gospel: What shall I say to comfort you? what to profit you?

You cannot, you ought not to be insensible of the loss of your Pastor, who watched over you with such diligence, and faithfulness, who was in labours so abundant; in troubles, discouragements, and oppositions so constant; and in the whole course of his Ministry, his Works shew'd his Hearts desire was, That you might be saved. I know the Circumstances concomitant to his removal also greatly aggravate it to you; that you are not onely sufferers in the loss of his Ministry, but (through your great love to him) you suffered in all his sufferings, and shared with him in bearing that load of Scandals which were cast upon him.

But was not this the case of the great Apostle? Did not the Orator Tertullus, with as much forma-

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lity usher in that wicked Slander against him, to the High priest? We have found this man a pestilent fellow, and a mover of sedition among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect of Nazarenes, *Act. 24. 5.* There is a root of Enmity in the minds of Carnal men, against the ways of God, and the people of God, that makes them study to defame them, and take up any report against them: *Jer. 20. 10.* Hence Reproaches and Slanders follow those who are most strict and zealous followers of Holiness, as the shadow follows the Sun. The Church of God is describ'd a speckled bird, and all the birds round about are against her. *Jer. 12. 9.* They think it strange (saith the Apostle) that ye run not with them to the same excels of riot, speaking evil of you, *1 Pet. 4. 4.* It is a life contrary to theirs, and therefore they can no more stand together than the Ark and Dagon. But how despicable and miserable soever they are in the eyes of the world, they are precious in the eyes of God: though the World speak all manner of evil of them, that is but as the sharp pricks that attend the sweet Roses; then are they most honour'd of God. It is what our Saviour bids us count not matter of exceeding great trouble, but exceeding great joy: Blessed are ye (it is a blessing in respect of the Event) when men shall revile you, and speak all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake; Rejoyce, and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven: *Matt. 5. 11, 12.* And the Apostle tells us, Our light afflictions worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, *2 Cor. 4. 17.* Little do those men that design

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trouble and mischief think, that they are Artificers at work about a good man's Crown, that they make it more bright, and more large and massie, whilst they make him smart; when we exercise a Christian behaviour in troubles, every stroke beautes and enlarges our crown of Glory; and when the World hath done its worst to make us miserable, then shall we be the most happy.

And blessed be God, he rules and governs the storms and tempests of the rage of Men, as well as the raging Sea, that they cannot throw all the filth they would upon his Heritage to overwhelm it, or overthrow it: in what degree soever the Wrath of Men prevails, it is by the permission and providence of God; he manages it for his holy purposes, moderates it to his peoples Capacities to bear it, and converts it to his own Glory, and their advantage. He lets some be the plagues of the Places where they live, to Execute his Justice; they are as a Rod in his hand to chastise the Disobedient: Aithur is said to be the rod of his anger: Isa. 10. 5. And those that were raised up to trouble and spoil, the Philistines, are called, The sword of the Lord, Jer. 47. 6. And that is a remarkable expression which follows in the next verse, How can it be quiet, seeing the Lord hath given it a charge against Ashtikon, and against the sea shore? there hath he appointed it. There is a hand of God in all those things that the rage or ill will of man brings to pass, ordering it for Judgment, or Mercy; and he ought to be ador'd and reverenced in it. As the skilful Workman doth that with a crooked Tool, which he cannot so well do with a straight one; So doth God exercise a Dominion over the Wicked as well as the

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Righteous, ordering their bounds which they cannot pass, and permitting and governing even their sinful actions, to make them subservient and instrumental to fulfil his holy Counsels. How did he let out the Jews Malice so far, as to bring about the work of Redemption? yet restrain'd it from every thing that might impair the truth of any prediction: tho they Crucified Christ with the Thieves, yet they did not break a bone of him, as they brake the Legs of the Thieves that were Crucifi'd with him: they did but just what the counsel of God determin'd before to be done, *Act. 4. 28.* tho they design'd nothing less than to glorifie God, but their intention and proceeding was of malicious wickedness.

Let this take you off all thoughts of revenge about this sad dispensation; do not like those Brutes, which bite the staff that beats them; but humble your selves under the mighty hand of God. How severely doth the Apostle rebuke the Corinthians for quarrelling with one another? Whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions; are ye not carnal, and walk as men? *1 Cor. 3. 3.* Tho he doth not say as Brutes; yet that is as much an expression of Diminution, to walk as men; for you ought not to walk as meer carnal men, who have nothing but what is natural to man; but as men that have a supernatural Principle of Grace, assisted by the spirit of Grace, and guided by a supernatural light, the word of God; you should walk as men actuated by a more noble principle, instructed & guided by a more perfect rule, and quickned by more spiritual motives, than men that have nothing but what is meerly human and natural. It is for Children to wrangle and fall out, who have not the discretion of

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a man to pass over a transgression, *Pro. 19. 11.* It is for carnal men to rage and quarrel, and rent one another, who have not Grace to forgive Injuries, and Love their Enemies : It is a shame for Christians to let impetuous lusts and passions govern them, who have a more noble principle, *fortes creantur fortibus, Horat.* They that are born of God should bear his Image, and do things that become their Excellency and Dignity, forgive great Injuries, be above great Temptations. 'Tis our Saviour's Argument, Love your enemies, — that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven, *Mat. 5. 44.* The greatness of your temptation makes me speak so largely and warmly of this : and I may add, it will tend much to the Confirmation of the just repute of the excellent Ministry which you have lived so many Years under, against all the endeavours to traduce it ; when you are living Descriptions of meekness, and have learned to put away a spiteful, bitter, turbulent and revengeful Spirit : For the partial World will say, *Si sancta docuisset, sanctè vixissent, Salvian.* If he had taught you to follow peace with all men, and holiness, you would have liv'd peaceable and holy lives. Nothing will so much gain a belief of the slanders unjustly cast upon him, of being Seditious, Factionous, &c. as your practises, if you who liv'd under his Ministry should fall into that snare.

Look higher than the Instruments, to the hand that could have diverted this stroke ; yea, have broken the staff in pieces, when he directed it with so much force upon you : Render not evil for evil, and railing for railing, but rather say as that good King of Shimei's fury and

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and cursing, 2 Sam. 6. 9, 10. Abithai would fain have been reveng'd on him, and asked the Kings leave; but David would not, but said, What have I to do with you, ye sons of Zerviah? So let him curse, because the Lord hath said unto him, curse David, who shall then say, wherefore hast thou done so? It is certain, God doth righteously order all his Providences; therefore let not your Indignation run out against his Instruments; but reflect upon your selves; say, what have I done? And what have we done, that hath thus provoked God, who hath been so very merciful to us so many years, in giving us such an excellent Ministry; now to let lose the wrath of man upon us, to deprive us of it? It seems a more Signal Judgment in removing him thus from you, to send him to another people, than if he had removed him by Death, to rest from his labours; this Providence seems to speak like our Saviour to the Jews, The Kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a people bringing forth the fruits thereof, Matt. 21. 43. It hath an humbling and awakening Consideration; you cannot be too much sensible of this Dispensation in this aspect of it, as a Judgment of God, for it is a terrible one. A sound Ministry is reckoned in Scripture amongst the chiefest of mercies: God often tells the Jews of his great love to them, in sending his Prophets rising early and warning them. When Christ ascended on high, and led captivity captive, he gave gifts to men, Eph. 4. 8, 11. What were the gifts that he bestow'd in that time of triumph, when he would express his bounty to the full? He gave some Apostles, some Prophets,

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Prophets, some Evangelists, some Pastors and Teachers; which in short, is, he gave able Ministers of the Gospel: This is such a blessing as should content us, tho we want many outward comforts; for so it is said, The Lord will be very gracious unto thee,—and tho he give you the bread of adversity, and the water of affliction; yet shall not thy teachers be removed into a corner any more, but thine eyes shall see thy teachers, *Isa. 30. 19, 20*: God is very gracious if he continue this mercy, tho he make your life bitter by the want of outward things for the Body; e'contra: How great then is the judgment of withdrawing this? That too, is express'd as terribly in Scripture, by a Famine, *Amos 8. 11*. a worse than a Famine of Bread, or a Thirst of Water, tho it may affect our sense more to express it by the parallel Calamity, which respects our natural Life; a Famine of food for the Body; yet it is as much greater than that, as spiritual Life exceeds natural Life; and therefore that Text adds, Not a famine of bread, or a thirst of water, but of hearing the words of the Lord; q.d. a far worse Famine than that, a far more exceeding weight of wrath.

How then should this pierce your hearts, and deeply affect you! Oh, see what is to be done for the appeasing this Indignation from Heaven against you; let your behaviour be such under this Dispensation, as under one of Gods severest Judgments, which he executes in this Word.

1. *Humble your selves under the mighty hand of God: This is the way to have it remov'd or sanctified*

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to you. Security is intollerable and insufferable, under such Providences as this. When God call'd to weeping and mourning, behold joy and gladness, eating of flesh and drinking of wine.—Surely this iniquity shall not be purged from you, till ye die, saith the Lord of Hosts, Isa. 22. 12, 14.

2. Search and try your ways, enquire into your personal sins, and your Parochial sins, and be humbled for them. Be not like those desperate Sinners of Israel, that for all Gods hand was out against them, no man repeated, saying, what have I done? Jer. 8. 6. All afflictions are the proper fruits of sin; tho'tis true, the Wisdom of God brings much good out of these evils; he makes them subservient to many glorious designs and purposes; to advance his own Glory, and to try and strengthen his peoples Graces, weaken their lusts and enlarge their Crown of Glory; they are sometimes ordered for other ends than bare chastisements for sin; yet where there is no sin, there is no suffering; but whatsoever good is found in them, or proceeds from them, is to be imputed altogether to the wisdom and goodness of God, in ordering and sanctifying them; and all that is grievous in them, is to be imputed to our sins, as the cause of it, which we ought to be humbled for; therefore we find the Church checking her complaints, and justifying God in his Judgments, that they are nothing but what we deserve; and calling upon us to perform our duty, to search and try our ways, and turn again to the Lord, Lam. 3. 39, 40. What hope have you that God shall reverse his Judgment, or plead your Cause, till you return to your Duty? Why cryest thou for thine

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thine affliction? thy sorrow is incurable for the multitude of thine iniquities, *Jer. 30. 15.* This rod that is now upon you, calls you to consider your ways, and to repent of the evil of them; specially enquire into, and lament your sins against the Gospel Ministry, when you did enjoy it; that is a notable expression in the Prophet Ezekiel, Because thou hast not remembered the days of thy youth, but hast fretted me in all these things; behold, therefore I also will recompence thy way upon thine own head, saith the Lord God, *Ezek. 16. 43.* God sometimes executes his Judgments by way of Retaliation, brings a mans way upon his own head, *2 Kings 20. 15, 17.* as Hezekiah by his proud glorying of his Treasure to the Babylonians, was spoiled of it; so he often punishes the contempt and abuse of a mercy, by removing the mercy; in that very thing wherein we fret the Lord, in that very thing he punishes us. Oh, let this bring your former days to remembrance; when you enjoy'd that great light, that excellent Ministry; were you thankful for it; did you improve it, and bring forth fruit answerable to it? Did you not fret the Lord in that very thing?

1. Recollect your selves; Were you swift to hear, waiting daily at the gates of Wisdoms house, as sick men do at the Physicians door? Were you not then ready to shelter your selves under very small and unnecessary occasions to excuse your neglect of many opportunities of hearing? I have observed in those places where Lectures were kept up on Week-days, (tho it is observable in those Towns and Places adjacent, was the best Preaching); and when there are occasional

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Sermons, as at Funerals, &c. the people are very remiss to go to Church, as if that was a work only for the Lords day; when they cannot lawfully do any thing else; it is a very great fault in them: For certainly that command to us, to preach the word in season, and out of season, 2 Tim. 4. 2 implies also the peoples duty to hear. I have had much in my thoughts, that remissness of hearers hath been the great occasion of the laying down weekly Lectures in so many places, where they have formerly been, through the just Judgment of God: And how much that hath tended to the decay of good Preaching, the effect shews; that being almost the sole opportunity of Ministers hearing each other, and conversing together, so as to improve their gifts. And wheresoever we find a Minister faithful and laborious in his calling, do we not hear the complaint of the people, that they have too much Preaching? Do they not loath the heavenly Manna? Was not this your Parochial sir? Let your consciences speak; 'tis in vain to hide it, for God is greater than the heart, and knoweth all things; judg your selves that you may not be condemned of the Lord. Oh, what an ungrateful return is it to the bounty of the great God! When he gives so great a blessing to a people, they will not lose an hours work in their worldly callings to receive the benefit of it! This is a Talent which God looks to have used, and improv'd, that we should be ready to hear: Prov. 5. 1. And prefers a desire to learn the Knowledge of his ways, and hearkening to his Word, before any service that we can do at that time; to hearken is better than the fat of rams, 1 Sam. 15. 22. Our blessed Saviour com-
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pare the refusing to hear the word of God, when we may, and he offers it to us, to the sin of Sodom, Matt.

10. 14, 15. We are glad of frequent showers of material rain to make the earth fruitful to us; and if we do not as thankfully receive the spiritual showers of the Ministry to make us fruitful to God, how just is it in him, to command the clouds that they rain no rain upon us? Isa. 5. 6. So he calls the Ministry of the Word, because by that his Vineyard is made fruitful unto him.

2. Take an account of your fruitfulness whilst you lived under this precious Ministry; how have you profited by it? Is your ignorance inform'd? Is your prophaneſs reform'd? Is your leproſie cleans'd? This is a Talent which God takes special account of the improvement of; to him that hath, shall be given; but to them who have made no good use of it, it hath had no saving effect upon their Souls; oh, wo is them. God looks that his Vineyard which he hath bestow'd dressing and watering upon, should bring forth good grapes, If. 5. 2. Yea, that your profiting should be proportionable to the means that you had; for our Saviour aggravates the sin of the Jews impenitence, from the excellency of the preaching which they had; a greater than Jonas is here — a greater than Solomon is here, Matt. 12. 41, 42. Christ preached with authority, and not as the Scribes; he spake as never man spake, and yet they would not be converted by his preaching: This made it more tolerable for the Heathen that sat in darkness, than for them that saw so great light. It will be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of Judgment, than for those Jews that heard so much excellent preaching, and saw

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so many miracles, and yet shew'd no fruit of conversion. God also looks for fruit proportionable to the time you enjoy the means; These three years I come seeking fruit on this fig-tree, and find none; cut it down, Luke 13. 7. saith our Saviour: What then shall be said to those whom God hath waited many years for fruit from, and yet findeth none? When many Sermons, yea for many years the constant Ministry of the Word of God hath been lost upon them, they bring forth no fruit of it? who can but think it in vain to Plant and Water any more? as there are blasted Ears of Corn that never thrive; all the Rain that comes upon them, doth them no good; so there are in God's Field, some that are under the power of their Disease; all the heavenly Rain of the Ministry of God's Word can do no good on them. Oh that any thing would turn your security into a godly fear and trembling! the Lord sanctifie this Providence to you, that it may effect that in you, which his Ordinance could not do without it; for his Divine Wisdom hath sometimes used this Method. Jer. 22. 21, 22. I spake unto thee in thy prosperity, but thou saidst, I will not hear; this hath been thy manner from thy youth, that thou obey'dst not my voice; The wind shall eat up thy pastors, surely then shalt thou be ashamed and confounded for all thy wickedness.

Consider, and lay to heart the aggravation of this Sin of unfruitfulness and incorrigibleness under the ordinance of God: when he hath sent an Ambassador who hath lifted up his voice on high to declare unto you your transgressions, and also intreated you affectionately to be reconciled to God, and preached

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both in season and out of season, in publick and private, as he hath done to you; yet he could not remove your mountain of Sin into the Sea of penitential Tears, and godly sorrow: is it not an argument that you are desperate and incurable? When God hath sent you such eminent means for your Conversion, and yet you are in your sins, what hope have you? How is it you are not afraid, that Christ shall say to you, Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever. Can you wink so hard, as not to see the danger you are in? if this Ordinance hath not all this time wrought any good effect upon your strong hearts, what shall be able to do it? This is the power of God to salvation, Rom. 1. 16. this is the hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces; Jer. 23. 29. If this hammer cannot break you, if you resist this power of God, what shall be able to Convert you? If you will not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will you be perswaded though one rose from the dead.

But be assured, though you now rebel against the light, God will one day overmaster your unruly spirits, and turn all your Waters into Blood, your mirth and laughter into terror and horror: Who ever hardned himself against the Lord, and prospered? Job 9. 4. This prophane security will not always animate you; God hath his time, when he will make you tremble before him: how soon that will be, you know not; but the Apostle saith, The earth which oft receiveth the rain, and brings forth thorns and briars, (Heb. 6. 7, 8. So he describes unprofitable hearers) is rejected, and nigh unto cursing. There are many Texts of Scripture as full of Terror to such, if they duly consider them,

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them, as the Hand-writing which Belshazzar saw on the wall: If our gospel be hid (saith the Apostle) it is hid to them that are lost, whose minds the God of this world hath blinded, 2 Cor. 4. 3. Words worthy of all observation. If it be hid, i. e. if men do not understand it, do not feel the power of it, it is because they are lost, sons of Perdition, persons that are perishing, the Devil hath shut their Eyes, and holds them fast in the Chains of darkness or ignorance; they are past the help of man, if the spirit of grace do not wonderfully open their Eyes, and unloose their Bonds.

And what think ye of this Dispensation, the removing the Ministry from you? if it be not sanctify'd to humble you, is it not a leaving you more desperate? as when Ephraim was incorrigible, God said, Let him alone: Hos. 4. 17. doth not this Providence speak the like to you, Let them alone; let them have no more awakening Ministry to disturb or disquiet them in their way; let them go on to Hell, without any to interrupt them? These are awakening considerations, to let you see the danger you are in.

Though there is yet very small probability of your salvation, to whom the Ministry hath not been the favour of life, yet God hath not declared an absolute impossibility: though he hath removed that Watchman which watched over you with diligence and faithfulness, and would not let you live quietly and securely in your sins without rebuke; yet he hath not taken your Bibles from you, nor stopped the mouths of all men, from calling you to Repentance; he hath not yet shut the door against you, and said, Depart from me ye workers of iniquity, I know you not, Rom. 2. 4.

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And the long-suffering and goodness of God in this forbearance of you, is to lead you to Repentance. Oh let this be oyl in your bones, to think your Conversion is yet possible ; whilst God waits for you, and calls to you, whilst there is some hope left, go and commune with your own hearts, how you can die; and bear the wrath of God ; whether it is not better to turn from your evil ways and live ; and make your humble Address to the Throne of Grace. say, Turn me; oh Lord, and I shall be turned ; I am weary of my former ways ; 'tis a shame and a grief to me, that I walked in them so long ; that I did not before now hearken to thy voice ; Oh say, I dare not go one step further in that way that I have all this while walked in ; there are roaring Lyons in that way, seeking to devour me ; there is Death, Wrath, and utter Destruction. And confer not with Flesh and Blood ; think not how the world will wonder at, and despise you, to see you new Converts at last ; 'tis better to have the World your Enemy, than that God should be your Enemy: Knowing the terror of the Lord, we perswade men, 2 Cor. 5. 11. If you did but know it, you would be perswaded out of every way that will enrage his justice against you, For our God is a consuming fire.

As many as have profited by the Ministry, bless God, both for the means and for the blessing ; he hath a special hand in the bringing of the Ministry to any people ; though he uses means in bringing it to pass, as he doth in the other ordinary Works of his providence : it is a special gift of God, a mercy dispos'd from Heaven ; the Patrons on earth, are but instruments to present it : I will give you Pastors according to mine

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heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding, saith the Lord: 'tis the Lord of the harvest that sends forth labourers into his harvest, *Fer. 3. 15.* And he orders the place where, and the time how long every one of them shall labour in his work. He holdeth the seven stars (*all the stars of the Churches*) in his right hand, *Revel. 2. 1.* Disposeth them as he pleaseth, and no man is able to pluck them out of his hand, or remove them, till they have done the work which he appointed them, and he orders them to be laid down or removed. Give God the praise of his merciful dealing to you, in giving you so choice a Ministry, and continuing it so long to you; prize the Benefit, and hold fast the form of sound doctrine delivered unto you; hide it in your hearts, (*as the royal Prophet David speaks of himself*) cover it with warmth as the fowl doth her eggs, *Psal. 119. 11.* Let it not dye and be forgotten, now he is removed that planted and watered it: let those precious Truths which he Preached, always sound in your Ears, and be remembered in your Lives.

Let the youth be lively Memorials in their Generation, of the pains that he took to Catechise and Instruct them: Ob let not that good seed be lost which hath been sown in you; let no Briars and Thorns, no inward Corruptions, nor outward Temptations, choak and destroy it: It had been better for you, not to have known the way of Righteousness, than after you have known it, to turn from the holy Commandments delivered unto you, *2 Pet. 2. 21.*

The Seamen whose calling led them abroad one part of the year, they had their seed-time too, and there-

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ore God doth expect a Harvest of Fruit from them: Ob be careful to Retain that savour of good things which was wrought in you by his Ministry, and watch against all those Corruptions that you have been warned of, and weaned from: if after you have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of Christ, you are again intangled therein and overcome, your latter end will be worse than the beginning, 2 Pet. 2. 26. How blessed a thing is it to be able to recollect your selves in times of Temptation, and say, I have been taught better; to be always doers of the Word which you have heard; retain a grateful sense of the Ministry that God hath vouchsafed to you; retain also an awful sense of those Providences, those Storms and Terrors at Sea, that have been like Ploughing and Harrowing of the Ground, to prepare you to receive the precious Seed; from you that have had such means to make it take deep Root in you, much constancy and fruitfulness is expected.

3. Submit to God in this dispensation of taking your vigilant Pastor from you: Say, the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; he is righteous in all his ways and works, let him be blessed in both, in all his Providences. He is the Lords Servant, and he may send him from you, to labour in another place, as well as he might have removed him to his Eternal Rest.

Take heed of murmuring; you know not what gracious designs God may have in this, though it be grievous to you: we do not judg the Husbandman angry with his Ground, when we see him tear it in pieces

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with his Plough; we do not censure the Artificer for hewing his Stone, that he will hew it to nothing, but expect patiently the issue of it; and should we not much more acquiesce in Gods Works of Providence, that he will work all for good? he may seem to us to be digging up the Bowels of the Church, when he is only preparing to lay a Foundation in Sion for an enlargement of it. It is Gods right to govern the World, and his Wisdom is infinite; he brings to pass his own Will, by ways that we cannot understand.

4. Take heed of distrusting God for want of visible means to carry on his work amongst you, and supplying all those Exigencies which your late Pastor was instrumental to supply. God hath made no instrument so useful and necessary to you, as he himself is; If the Lord be your shepherd, you shall not want, Psa. 23.

1. God never wants Instruments to do his work. He is not like the Artificer, that can do nothing without his Tools: though he uses means, he is not tyed to any: Who is Paul? and who is Apollo? but Ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man: Paul planted, and Apollo watered, but God gave the increase, 1 Cor. 3. 5, 6. We are labourers together with God; ye are Gods husbandry, ye are Gods building, ver. 9. Whatsoever good work God hath begun in you by his Ministry, he will certainly finish it; he will make all perfect at last: he is not like the foolish Builder, who began to build what he could not finish; he will make every Grace perfect before he hath done with you, and is not ty'd to the person whom he imploy'd to lay the Foundation, as the only means to accomplish it: never fear that Satan

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• or the World can destroy the Work of God. Christ cast out Devils out of men, but the Devil can never cast Christ out of the heart of any man. Though now you seem to be in a great disorder, as Sheep without a Shepherd; that able Minister of the Gospel, who did faithfully declare to you the counsel of God, was always ready to solve your doubts, to instruct and strengthen you against your Temptations; made it not onely his business, but his delight to watch over you, and to be beneficial to you, he is now taken from you; but God hath not left you; fear not, he will find ways to put all into excellent order at the last; Let his rod and his staff comfort you, Psal. 23. 4. who is the great and good Shepherd of your souls; he knows his Sheep: and that Metaphor of the Psalmist, very Emphatically and comfortably shews, he takes a special knowledge and care of them, that he loses none: a Rod and a Staff are badges of a Shepherd; a Rod is to count his Sheep, a Staff to keep them. God is thus graciously present with his people; you have a good Shepherd still, whose Omniscient Eye counts you as with a Rod, inspects every particular Person of you, that none be carried away, and the Staff of his Providence shall defend you, that none shall pull you out of his hand,

Do you labour under other wants, which he was wont to be the instrument to supply? What becomes of the poor Orphans? Who hearkens to the loud cries, and bitter sighs of the desolate Widows, about the Education of their Children? What shall they do now? Why, cast all your cares upon God, for he careth for you, 1 Pet. 5. 7. That is a full Text for such, and worthy of your Application, which you read Jer. 49. 11.

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Leave thy fatherless children, I will preserve them alive, and let thy widows trust in me. Doth he take care of Sparrows, and of the young Ravens that cry? and will he not much more regard his more noble Creatures? Yes, the very hairs of our head are numbered, and not one of them falls without his leave; and if he exercise such a tender Providence over all Mankind, to be called the preserver of men, Job 7. 20. How much more bowels of pity and compassion hath he towards his gracious Creatures, his choicest workmanship? So that you may go to God believingly, and humbly plead, Lord, are we not thy Creatures, the work of thy Hands? Thou hearest the cry of the Ravens, and wilt thou not hear the cry of thy own people? The Sea-monsters draw out their breasts to their young ones, and wilt thou not behold us thy children, and supply our wants? He exercises a special tender Providence over those that are cloathed with miserable circumstances: Hence he is called, a helper of the fatherless, Psal. 10. 14. And the poor are said to be committed unto him. So Psal. 146. 9. The Lord preserveth the stranger, he relieveth the fatherless and widow. And Hos 14. 3. In thee the fatherless findeth mercy. O the Instrument which you lose is nothing to the Agent who is still with you. From this consideration will flow abundant Meditations, sweeter than honey or the honey Comb, to revive you under the sad sense of this, and all other losses which you sustain. This fountain is deep, and large, and full enough to supply all your wants, if you have but wherewith to draw. Two things especially are of use for that.

1. Prayer. This is the Key to open God's Treasure to us. Ask and it shall be given you, Matt. 7. 7. Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, saith our blessed Saviour, John 14. 13. But he looks to be sought to by us first. Pray ye the Lord of the harvest that he will send forth labourers into his harvest; Matt. 9. 38. That is the way to have your want well supply'd. Expect not to succeed well in your choice of a Minister, if you do not interest Providence in it; and so in all your concerns; God only can bless you, and he can bless you; be not therefore careless of his concurrence; seek to him in the first place.

2. Faith: Not only the Habit, but the acting of Faith is necessary: The Habit is necessary, for if we are not in covenant with God, and so interested in his fullness, what is it all to us? when he is our God, and our Father, then his bowels are concerned for

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us, his treasures are laid up for us, his wisdom, power, goodness, and all work for us; he rules the heavens and the earth, but he loves his holy ones; other creatures are the objects of his providence, but they are the end of it, he does all for them, he makes all things work together for their good, Rom. 8. 28. and gives all things to them, so far as he sees they are for their good; Whether Paul or Apollo, or Cephas, life or death, all are yours, and ye are Christs, 1 Cor. 3. 22. There is no want to them that fear him, Psal. 34. 9. They may think they want something, which they have not, but the wisdom of God sees and knows they do not want it, for else his treasure would be opened to supply them.

But besides this habit of grace, which entitles us to the promises, there must be an actual exercise of it; we must live by faith, live with a dependance upon God, and trust his providence. The want of this ties his hands from working for us, and reaching out supplies to us. The more we trust him, the more he concerns himself for us; the more we trust our selves, the more he delights to cross us. He hath denounced that man cursed, that trusteth in the arm of flesh, for that is a departing from the Lord; but blessed is the man who trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is, Jer. 17. 5, 7. Oh trust God in your greatest extremities; great Temptations and Tribulations are for the trial of your faith, 1 Pet. 1. 7. to make it appear more gloriously; make good proof of it; say as Job, Tho thou slay me, yet will I put my trust in thee. Trust him with your souls as well as Bodies. Whatsoever measures you meet with from the World; what derision or contempt, what scorn or ignominy, what oppression or violence, for the sake of Religion; tho your Teachers be rent from you, and you have none left to comfort you; yet say as the Apostle, I know in whom I have believed, and I am perswaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him against that day, 2 Tim. 1. 12. Lastly, Trust God in his own way; use no indirect means to escape any Temptations or Trials. Let them that suffer according to the will of God, commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator, 1 Pet. 4. 19. 'Tis neither for your honour nor safety, to go out of Gods way to avoid any imminent danger or approaching

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proaching trouble. Now God seems to be trying what credit he hath in the world, who they be that will trust him (commit themselves Soul and Body, their temporal and spiritual Estate to him in will doing, as unto a faithful Creator), who will love him, and fear him more than man, oh do not forsake God, and he will not forsake you. Do not think of returning back from the good profession which you have made, for any interest in the world, or for the frowns or flatteries of any men. They who do not prefer Christ before all, and follow him, are not worthy of him; they will lose the reward of all the good they have done. The Promise is, He that endureth to the end shall be saved, Matt. 10. 22. Be faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life, Rev. 2. 10. The just shall live by faith; but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him, Heb. 10. 38.

It's not your real interest to draw back; what alas! is the favour or frowns of a few loose men, or of the most splendid and magnifi'd dust and ashes; compar'd to the Love of God, or the weight of his wrath? Who can reckon up the number, or express the greatness of the losses which come by Apostacy? You must expect then to lose all the peace within you, which is a good that passes all understanding; there are no ways so dreadful, no wounds so intolerable as those intestine in the conscience. You will thereby renounce Heaven, and all the good things there, which are more than the heart of man can conceive. You'll cast away your immortal souls, which are more worth than a world, and you'll lose God, who is the fountain and treasure of all good. Oh, that ever any men should be so seduc'd to believe it their interest to leave the ways of God, to run into the same excesses and corruptions as those do who have no portion in the Kingdom of God, nothing to lose! Suppose by your relinquishing all strict and holy walking, you should attain to be as much honour'd of men, as ever you were or can be despis'd; what is it good for? Will that commend you to God? Will it be an ark to save you, when the deluge of wrath cometh? Will it be a mark that the destroying Angel shall pass over and not consume you? That which will do this, is good indeed; but your Apostacy will rather mark you for vessels of wrath: How shall not God set himself against those that set up themselves by Apostatising from him, and Rebelling against him? Suppose you should have some fair hopes to advance your Trade, or to increase your Estates by other preferments, upon deserting a good Profession and

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vigorous Pursuit of holiness; these are but vain hopes; suppose they should succeed a little while, God will make you vomit up those profitable morsels, and you shall pay dear for it, lose more by it; account not of any increase by sin, that is not the way to treasure up riches, but wrath, and bring a curse upon all that you have. Say rather, Apostacy will never be worth so much to me, as I should lose by it. Godliness is profitable for all things, having the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come, 1 Tim. 4. 8. But that profit which is got by ungodliness, God will blast it, it will melt away like the dew, 'twill be but like money put in a bag with holes.

1. I am jealous for you, lest at the taking away this great pillar of Religion from you, the building should shake, and many of you fall; oh, let every man in his place put to his hand to support it.

1. Strengthen your selves against the Temptations before you: consider your selves in your proper Relation, and submit to nothing unworthy of it. Shall the kings daughter clothed in wrought gold and curious needlework, Psal. 45. 13, 14. (so the Church is describ'd) tumble in the dirt with Swine? Thus it is for the Sons of God, adorned with the graces of his Spirit, to corrupt and defile themselves with the ways of carnal men. Shall the heirs of Heaven be tempted and carryed away with the interests, vanities and follies of this corrupt world? Shall the Children of God learn to Blaspheme the name of their Father? It is no less than Blasphemy to say, that God is the father of wicked men, who notoriously do the works of the Flesh and the Devil; you call God father, then tremble to fall into the snare of the Devil, and abhor all temptations to do his works, or serve his interest.

2. Be very careful to keep up the worship of God in your families: let every one of your houses be a house of prayer, and every household a household of faith; say as good Joshua, As for me and my house we will serve the Lord, Josh. 24. 15. Seek the kingdom of God in the first place. What do you live for, but to serve God? then let not that work be the last in your care. You are careful to have your meals in order, your worldly business done in due order & measure; & is it not a shame then, that the service of God should be neglected? Whatsoever is left undone, let not your religious duties to God be left undone.

1. Be very constant to offer up to God your daily sacrifice of prayer and praise in your families. Let there not be found a
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mongst you a family that calls not upon the name of the Lord lest the wrath of the Lord be against it, Jer. 10. 25. It's not enough not to have families unclean dens of swearing, cursing, & blasphemy; but they ought to be holy temples to the Lord. There are family wants to be supply'd, & family mercies receiv'd, and God looks for the glory that is due unto his name. Say not, your business will not give leave; this is your greatest business; and this is the way to succeed in all your business, to interest providence in all your concerns, Job 22. 27, 28. How can you expect he should prosper you in your way, if you never commend your selves and your affairs to his conduct?

2. *Be often exercis'd in the reading of the Scriptures: that is the rule to walk by; therefore it concerns you to be acquainted with it. Tho David had the most eminent Ministry, both Nathan and Gad (Prophets) were constantly with him; he was commanded to have his Bible with him also, and to read in it every day: It shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the Lord his God, to keep all the words of this law, and these statutes, to do them, and that he turn not aside from the commandment to the right hand, or to the left, &c. Deut. 17. 19, 20. How much more are you obliged by this reason to the same duty, to read the Scriptures daily, who want the other eminent means of instruction which he had? It was Jobs comfort in his affliction, that he had esteemed the word of God more than his necessary food, Job 23. 12. i.e. He t*u*d himself to the reading and meditation of it, more duely than to his meals. This is the field wherein the treasures of eternal life is hid, and here we must all search for it, Joh. 5. 39. But it's not reading much at a time, and without understanding, that will advantage you; but reading often, attentively, and considerately, meditating of what you read, searching out the sense and mind of God therein revealed, and considering how it concerns you; how it is profitable for your direction, correction, or consolation? This is made the character of a happy man; His delight is in the law of the Lord, and in it he doth meditate day and night, Psal. 1. 2. He doth not read a chapter or chapters, only in a formal way, and lay it by, as if his work was done; but considers of it day and night, and digests it by meditation. The Psalmist*

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who so happily improv'd this means, that he attain'd to more wisdom than his teachers, mentions this to be his practice, I will meditate on thy precepts, and have respect unto thy ways, Psal. 119. 15. And he assigns two excellent effects and fruits of it in the next verse. 1. I will delight in thy statutes, v. 16. Meditation makes a man come to a right understanding of it, and be affected with it. 2ly. I will not forget thy word; It fixes it upon the heart, that it is not so easily and quickly forgotten. Another means also, which the Scripture commends to us, to help us to profit by reading, is to discourse of it. This book shall not depart out of thy mouth, -- that thou mayst observe to do according to all that is written therein; for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success, Josh. 1. 8.

Be very diligent to catechise and instruct your Children and Families in the principles of Religion. You are careful to teach them to live in the World, to make them learn to work & provide for their decaying dying bodies; and is it not of much greater moment to teach them to live to the glory of God, to work out their salvation, and lay up treasures in heaven for their immortal souls? It is your duty to bring up your children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, Eph. 6. 4. Pro. 22. 6. Train up a child in the way he should go. In the margin it is catechise; the sense is, Teach Children, according to their capacity to receive it; a narrow mouth'd bottle is not filled at once, put it into the water, & it receives none; but put it in water gradually, so you fill the bottle; thus must you instil instruction into them in that manner & measure as they are capable to receive it; train them up by degrees to know, & to walk in the way they should go. Satan hath no stronger bonds to hold them in bondage to sin, than the chains of darkness and ignorance. How many are they they that are destroy'd for lack of knowledge, Hos. 4. 6. To whom is the word without profit? To whom is it the savour of death, more than to the grossly ignorant? How much would it trouble you to have your children or your servants blind, that they cannot do your work? Would you not seek out for help for them? Would you not apply any remedy that you knew to heal them? And can you be willingly accessory to their ignorance and spiritual blindness? Will you do nothing for them, that

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the eyes of their understanding may be opened, that they may serve God? Oh make them to know Gods Will, as well as yours, what they ought to do; let them, make them know, what an Egypt they are redeemed from, how woful their condition is by nature. What a treasure of evil is in their hearts, and what a contempt of God there is in all the actual sins of their life. How terrible the Justice and Severity of God against sin is: How dreadful the death of the wicked; and set before them the lively hope of the Gospel, that they may pant after the blood of Christ, as the hart panteth after the waterbrooks; and then teach them to go to the throne of Grace for sanctifying Grace, and instruct them how to walk worthy of this Grace, and by degrees bring them to know the whole counsell of God revealed in his word. Thou shalt teach them diligently to thy children; the margent reads it, whet or sharpen the Divine truths, talking of them in your houses, Deut. 6. 7. that they may enter like a sword into the inward parts.

4. And then govern them, not with rigour; for of the forward they will learn frowardness; that spirit which becomes not the Gospel, least of all becomes those that are Governours and Teachers, and tends more to turn their hearts against Religion, than to train them up in the love of it; nor yet with fondness, as David educated his son Adonijah; who usurped the Crown in his Fathers old age, and this is noted to be the occasion of it, his father had not at any time displeased him, in saying, why hast thou done so? 1 King. 1. 6. He had never so much as given him an angry word, was afraid of displeasing him, and this lost his authority and awe upon him. When Eli did not use his authority to restrain his sons from sinning, God charged it upon him, thou honourest thy sons above me, 1 Sam. 2. 29. You are to keep up your authority, and to use it prudently and piously, to see that God is honoured by all that are under your government; ye shall command your children to observe to do all the words of this law, Deut. 32. 46. We exhorted and charged every one of you (saith the Apostle) as a father doth his children, 1 Thess. 2. 11. God often lays the childrens sins to their Parents charge, when they do not their duty in governing them in their minority; how did he judge the house of Eli, because his sons made themselves vile, and he

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he restrained them not? 1 Sam. 3. 13. Oh consider seriously what a sad reckoning you will be able to make in the great day of account, if you should let any of your own children (that are flesh of your flesh) perish through your fault, when God hath committed them to you to be brought up in his fear, and given you authority over them, to restrain them from sinning, and to keep them in his way; but (on the other side) 'twill be an unspeakable joy and comfort, if you can be able to say of your children to the Lord, as our blessed Saviour speaketh, Those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, John 17. 12.

I do heartily commiserate every one of you, who have lost so excellent an instrument to instruct you in all things of duty, and piety, and to facilitate your work in bringing your families to God: now the pillar is gone, the more rests upon you to bear, and the more is expected from you to do. But can I without tears speak what I ought to the widows, who have yet a heavier burden upon them; your children have as much need of instruction and good government as any; they have as much corruption in their nature, as much blindness upon their hearts, and as much hardness in their hearts, as any, and they have not a father to awe them, to cease to do evil, and learn to do well: the whole work lies upon you: you must do the part of both father and mother to them; are not your bowels enlarged towards them? Let your diligence be also doubled, and trust God for his blessing upon your endeavours: he can make a mother as eminent a means to instruct her Children, as she is observed to be to comfort them, Isa. 66. 13. He that commands the son to hear the law of his mother, and not forsake it, is able also to bow his heart to obey it, Pro. 1. 8. and 6. 20. Are you in the distress of Widows? Then be found in the duties of Widows, and fear not, Gods work shall be done, and you shall have your reward, 1 Tim. 5. 5.

5. Be very careful that your whole family sanctifie the Lords-day, and do the Lords work on his day, as diligently as they do your work on the six days. The commandment expressly requires all you that are governours to inspect your Children and

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and Servants; and their prophaning it, will be charged upon you, if you restrain them not. If that day was but duly imploy'd in publick and family and private duties, ignorance and prophaneſs could not reign as it doth at this time. But when a people lose that marker-day for the soul, for buying the truth, and so never treasure up good things: no wonder that out of the evil treasure of the heart proceed evil things.

Lastly, Give good example to your families. Be careful to exercise a conscience void of offence toward God and toward men: in this approve your selves to be the children of Abraham, Who commanded his children and his household after him: he went before them, and commanded his family to follow after; this made them keep the way of the Lord, Gen. 18. 19. Examples do more than precepts, both for building up and pulling down. Be not, oh be not as a Fly in the Box of precious Ointment, a Scandal and Reproach to the ways of God, & a stumbling-block to your families or others, by any immoral practices: Wo be to you, by whom such offences come. Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation. The watchman of Israel, that neither slumbreth nor sleepeth, keep you to the end, and establish you in every good word and work.

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A
GUIDE
TO
Scatter'd Flocks, &c.

I Am very sensible, that many have enjoyed the Powerful awakening Ministry of the Word, and by their Sins have provok'd God to deprive them of many able, worthy Ministers; and under this severe Dispensation may want Heavenly and Seasonable Advice: I was willing to give them my best Assistance, in handling and answering these Five Weighty and Material Questions.

A
B

1. What

1. *What a great happiness it is to a Nation, or a particular Town or Congregation, to enjoy a powerful sound and godly Ministry?*

2. *What a fearful sore Judgment it is when God takes away a Powerful sound Ministry from a Nation or particular Congregation?*

3. *For what Sins God doth usually inflict this Judgment?*

4. *What may comfort Believers that have gained saving Grace by the Ministry before the removal of it: And what is their duty under such a loss?*

5. *What is the misery of such as never reaped Fruit thereby, and what they ought to do? Under these Five Heads, I will reduce what I intend to say.*

Qⁿ. 1.

1. *The first Query is, What a happiness it is to a Nation or a particular Congregation to enjoy a Powerful, Sound, and Godly Ministry?*

In Answer to this, I might undertake to fathom the Sea, to paint out the light of the Sun, to touch the Heavens with my Finger, as well as to give any *Adequate* Conception or discovery of this Truth.

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Beneficia Dei, maxime qua in Christo ad vitam aeternam spectant omnis humani sensus capere superant : As the Apostle hath told us, *Eye hath not seen, nor Ear heard, neither have entred into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love him,* 1 Cor. 2. 9. This is no part of my undertaking ; yet we may comfortably apprehend, what we cannot sufficiently comprehend ; we may with delight and safety Sail in this Ocean, which no Line of Human understanding can sound the depth of. There was nothing wherein *Israel* outstripped all the rest of the World more, than in this Privilege, in injoying the Ark, the Pledge and Token of his Covenant and Presence, and the Law written with God's own hand. Oh, what a favour is it then, where God bestows his Gospel upon any Nation or People ? That was but a killing Letter : this is the Power of God to Salvation. God never was throughly displeased with that people, where his Gospel lively preach'd hath its Residence ; but he is sorely displeased with them from whom his Gospel is banished by their Sins, and removed in his just Anger ; for as they that purposed Love, and a Marriage Uni-

on with their intended Brides, if they fall off, call for their Tokens back again; so when God begins once perfectly to mislike a People, the first thing he withdraws, is his Gospel: But the Lord in mercy avert this *Omen* from the Land in which we live, and the places where the light of his Gospel doth yet clearly shine, and keep our Ark from falling into the *Philistines* hands, and our Gospel Liberties from falling into the hands of the Uncircumcised *Romanists*, for then we may truly write upon our Church-doors, *Ichabod, the glory of God is departed from our Land.* And that we may with deeper resentment Apprehend the mischief of a Total absence of Gospel Light, I will first discourse of the happiness of a People under a Gospel Ministry, where Christ the true Light shineth, and is arisen upon them like a Sun of Righteousness with healing in his Wings. 1. The Gospel of Christ never comes to a place empty handed, but as *Obed Edoms* House was Blessed for the *Arks* sake, so are Places and Persons blessed by God for the Gospels sake; especially, where the Gospel is truly Embraced and valued. 2/y. As it never comes without a blessing, so it brings

brings not a single Blessing along with it. *St. Paul* told the *Romans*, That he intended to come to them ; and that he was sure when he did come, he should come with the fullness of the blessing of the Gospel of *Christ*. *Rom.* 15. 24. The Gospel carries a full blessing where e're it goes. Nothing can be wanting to make him that receives it by a lively Faith, compleatly Happy ; for in the Gospel Dispensation, *Christ* is held forth as a Tree of Life, that which bears Twelve manner of Fruits, and yields its fruit every Month, and the Leaves of this Tree are for the Healing of the Nation. 1st. In *Christ* all necessities for Food and Physick are to be found. 2^{ly}. All varieties of Fruit, Twelve manner of Fruit, a distinct sweetness in the Promises *Christ* makes, and in the Blessings that he gives, especially in the Spiritual Blessings which he doth pour out upon the Souls of Believers in a more abundant manner. 3^{ly}. In him are these Fruits to be found at all times, he bears Fruit every Month, *Winter*, and *Summer* ; his Fruit is alike present and precious ; and the Gospel is the Garden in which this Tree of Life grows, which should teach all highly to value the Gospel wherein

Christ is so lively represented both to our Sight and Taſt. That I may more fully clear the bleſſedneſs of a People under a Goſpel Miniſtry, let us conſider both what the Goſpel is, and what the Faithful Miniſters are, that Chriſt makes uſe of in diſpenſing of the bleſſings of the Evangelical grace. To theſe Two Heads I will reduce what ſhall be ſpoken for confirmation of it. Firſt, let us conſider, what the Goſpel is, where I will ſhew, what it is in its general Nature, *εὐαγγέλιον* a Doctrine of joyſul News, or glad Tidings. 2. What is the particular glad Tidings the Goſpel brings. 3. What certainty there is of the Truth of this News. 4. What Effects this Goſpel hath. And 5ly. What Titles the Scripture gives to it. 1. What the Goſpel is in its general Nature, and what it ſignifies, *εὐαγγέλιον* or the Goſpel ſignifies in its proper Notation of the Original Word, any good Meſſage, or joyſul News. *How beautiful are the feet of them that bring glad Tidings, or preach the Goſpel of peace. εὐαγγελιζομένων*: and thus it is chiefly by way of Excellency reſtrained in Scripture, to ſignifie, The ſweet and comfortable Doctrine of Salvation by Jeſus Chriſt.

Thus,

Rom. 10.
15.

Thus an Angel from Heaven Expounds the Word, *Luk. 2. 10, 11. ευαγγελίζομαι* *I bring you glad Tidings* ; and addeth by way of proof, *That unto you is born a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.* And hence the Histories which purpose-ly Write of Jesus Christ, declaring his Deity, Humanity, Conception, Birth, Life, Death, Words and Deeds, his Humiliation and Exaltation, are by an Excellency called Gospels ; and in this sence we understand it, It is the Preaching of the Gospel of Christ, and Salvation by him. This Revelation of Christ, and the grace of God by him, together with the offer of Salvation in his Name, by the Preaching of the Word, is without Controversie and beyond all comparison, the most joyful Tidings that ever poor Sinners can hear : such was Man's woful Estate that he had plunged himself into by Sin, that his condition was helpless and hopeless in respect of any succour he could have from any Creature in Heaven or Earth. Now by the Determinate Counsel of God, the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, the Second Person in Trinity was Incarnate, and made Man, and delivered unto Death for our Offences, raised

Rom. 3. 25.

again for our Justification ; God did set him forth to be a Propitiation for our Sins through Faith in his Blood ; and having wrought and obtained Eternal Redemption for us, and brought us to the hope of a more excellent Happiness than ever we fell from ; God doth by the Preaching of the Gospel offer and assure us of forgiveness of Sins, and Eternal Life, in case we receive him, and obey the Gospel. Never was there such glad Tidings as this ; nor could any other Message so comfortable as this, be brought to the Ear of Man. And truly 'tis such good News, (that as a Worthy Divine saith) *No good News could come before it, and no bad News can follow after it, to them that imbrace Christ by Faith, that is offer'd to them in the Gospel.*

First, God could not shew any kindness to Sinners, had he not taken this course to reconcile them to himself in Christ. God could not *Quod res volitas*, as to the good things intended, give us any thing, or shew us any good will, but in Christ. Christ makes peace for us on Earth, and then God shews good-will to us in the Effects of it, though Christ himself be the Fruit and Effect of his Eternal good-will he bears to us

2ly.

2ly, No ill News can come after the glad tiding of the Gospel, to them that by Faith do savingly believe in Jesus Christ. Gods love in Christ alters the property of all evils to believers; for the worst of evils *shall work together for good, to them that are called according to his purpose*, Rom. 8. 28. And when things went worst with *Israel*, and their Affairs as to worldly concerns at the lowest Ebb; this was the comfortable message with which God supports them, *Isa. 7. 14. Micah 5. 5.* Now there are five Circumstances concerning this News, that make it acceptable to Admiration.

1. 'Tis good News the Gospel brings: ill News may affect us with fear; 'tis good News only that can fill the heart with joy; in the Law there is fiery Indignation threatned, in the Gospel most Divine Consolation promised; in the Law Hell is threatned, in the Gospel Heaven is promised; the Law threatens us to make us as miserable as the Devils in Hell, the Gospel to make us as happy as the Angels in Heaven; the Law represents God as an angry Judge, sitting upon a Tribunal of strict Justice,

stee, frowning on the Sinner, with Beams of terrible Majesty; the Gospel represents him as a reconciled God and Father, sitting upon a Throne of Grace, smiling upon a repenting believing Sinner, filled with Bowels full of tender mercy.

2. The News is so good, that we cannot desire better; Nay, 'tis every way as great as it is good: behold, saith the Angel, *I bring you tidings of great joy*; 'tis great deliverance Christ hath given us from sins captivity, Satans Tyranny, from the Laws Curse, from Gods Justice, from the Power of the First and Second Death; 'tis great Salvation that is purchased, a great Inheritance in Heaven settled. God hath raised mankind more glorious out of his ruins, than he was in the State of Innocency; promised a greater reward, than ever *Adam* could have earnt or expected; his happiness shall bear proportion to the Blood of Christ that purchased it.

3. The News is no foreign News, that no way concerns us; but what we have an everlasting concernment in; it tells us not what God hath done for Angels, but what he hath done for us; 'tis that

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that we may have propriety in, if we reject it not, and put away this Salvation from our selves; To you is a Saviour born, Christ the Lord. 'Tis propriety that makes the Mercy infinitely sweeter than it is; what joy was it to *Lazarus*, to see so many dishes of Meat served up in Plate to *Dives* his Table, whilst he lay Starving at the Gate? What joy is it to a poor man to see thousands of Gold and Silver, whereof he shall never enjoy a penny? What comfort is it for a Sick man to hear of another mans recovery, whilst he is drawing near the Gates of Death? But give food to the hungry, wealth, to the poor, health to the sick, this revives their heart; and to assure a man, that if it be not his own fault by wilful rejecting of grace, the Grace of God it may be his; and that he that believes, this Wine of Gospel joy is laid up for him.

4. News of some great good unexpected, that was never lookt for, is very welcome; for a Kings Son that is Heir apparent to the Kingdom, which he expected, and lookt for, for him to be put into Possession of it, it will not much augment his joy; but for a man of mean quality

quality that never dreamt or expected such an advancement, to receive a Kingdom, this begets unspeakable Joy. The Redemption wrought by Christ, was never desired nor expected till God promises it; such News is brought to man that was so unheard of, or unlookt for, that could never have come into the thoughts of Men and Angels, and for an intire eternity laid hid in the Counsels of his own breast, that the Angels do now pry into that Mystery. Now it is revealed, and man instead of expecting Salvation, might in the Book of the Scripture have read his own Condemnation; and Hell, not Heaven, was looked for. For a condemned man to dye, to be taken from the Ladder, when the Rope was about his Neck, and he ready to be turned off, to have a Pardon sent and advanced, magnifies the Mercy; so it's here, there wanted nothing but Execution of the Sentence to make us compleatly miserable.

5. It is News as certainly true, as it is good. Were it uncertain, a flying report asserted to day, contradicted to morrow, it would administer little joy; of which certainty I shall speak in the third

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third particular propounded, and therefore forbear to insist on it here.

Secondly, Having in general related the joyful tidings of the Gospel: I come now to the particular glad tidings the Gospel brings: which are,

First, Peace and Reconciliation with God. Peace is a great blessing, and one of the main Priviledges of the Gospel. Peace with men is desirable, but Peace with God is precious. Of all Peace, Peace with God is most excellent; if God be an adversary, there is none so powerful and dreadful as he; and if a Friend, there is no Friend like unto him; so that he is the best Friend, the worst Enemy; but the Gospel is a Gospel of Peace, and proclaims openly, that God is at peace with man, which is the only Doctrine can calm the conscience, and establish the Soul in Peace and Hope. *God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself; and the chastisement of our peace was upon him, Isa. 53. 5. And he hath made peace through the Blood of his Cross, Col. 1. 20.* It would not stand with the Majesty of God to make Peace without satisfaction; that

that there might be no wrong done to his Sovereignty, his Law, his Truth, his Justice, his Holiness; and it was meet we should be chastised in our selves, or Surety: now our Surety was chastised, and the chastisement of our Peace was on him, and God is now reconciled. Man by Nature is at enmity with God, and upon ill terms with him; when we lost Gods Image, we lost his favour; man is an enemy to God, and God to man. On Gods part there is Wrath, on Mans part there is Hatred; but now God is thus far reconciled by Christ, that by the Gospel, which is a Gospel of Peace, God is upon treaty with us, and offers us Peace, and frequently styles himself the God of Peace, and offers man Reconciliation; and hence at the Birth of Christ proclaimed, *Gloria to God in the highest, on earth peace, good will to men*, Luke 2. 14. And upon our believing in Christ, according to the command of the Gospel, God justifieth us; and being justified, we are at peace with God, in a sure state; upon Gospel terms we are at Amity with God, and the Peace is mutual. And God gives us a sense of this state, which is usually called the peace of Conscience, and

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and is a special Priviledg of Christs Kingdom, *Rom. 14. 17.* and the Apostle speaks of a Peace, wherein the Kingdom of God consists, that is accompanied with *peace and joy in the Holy Ghost.* And God being reconciled, all Creatures are reconciled with him; God and all his Creatures are confederates, are in the league; God contracts for himself and subjects; and hence Angels are at peace with us; yea, a believer is *in league with* *Job 5. 23.* *the stones of the field, and the beasts are at peace with him:* they are included in Gods league with us, which is as much as if there were an expresse Covenant between us and them; and for the Angels, *Heb. 1. 4.* they are Ministring spirits sent forth for our good, and are an invisible guard about us for our defence. And Christ is not only the Author, but Conservator of our Peace, between God and us; as foreign States have their Agents in Princes Courts, to preserve a mutual correspondence, so Christ taketh up all differences between God and us, and he besprinkles our consciences by his blood, that they speak Peace, and his spirit seals it. What an incomparable blessing is this?

2ly, The second glad tidings it proclaims,

Col. 2. 13.

claims, it is pardon and forgiveness of sins; hence Acts 10. 43. *To him (that is Christ) give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth on him, shall receive remission of sins.* There's an act of Indempnity and general Pardon proclaimed to all believers, and we may take Sanctuary in the Gospel-grace; it will secure us from all fear of Arrests; our Debt is paid, our Sins forgiven; God hath forgiven us all our sins, if we believe there is a full and plenary Pardon granted; 'tis not a half Remission, but a full Remission of all sin. God hath put all thy sins out of his sight, there shall be no back-reckonings. *In those daies, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and shall not be found, Jer. 50. 20.* 'Tis an allusion to a man that turns over all his Bonds, and searches all his Debt-books, to see if he can find any Debt due to him from such and such a Person; but in all his searching, he cannot find one Debt to charge upon him; so it is with the pardoned Sinner; suppose God should be inquisitive to find out some guilt lying upon him, and as he is in Christ justified, he can find none; this is highly Consolatory to a guilty Sinner upon repenting

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penitent and believing, to find all pardon-
ed; this is rich Grace in God to for-
give, and the Gospel holds forth the
pardoning grace of God in Christ, *I am Isa. 43. 25.*
he that blotteth out thy transgressions for
my Names sake, and will not remember
thy sins.

3ly. The Gospel freely proclaims free-
dom from Death and Condemnation;
There is therefore now no condemnation to Rom. 8. 1.
them that are in Christ Jesus. The Sin-
ner was under the sentence of Condem-
nation by the Law, and in the state of
Condemnation; now that sentence is
Reversed, he doth not say, There is no
Affliction to them that are in Christ Je-
sus; nor doth he say, There is no Mat-
ter of Condemnation: there is enough
and enough in the best of the Saints to
deserve Condemnation; and if God
should proceed according to what their
sins do merit, they would meet with Con-
demnation over and over again. The
Saints have sin, and commit sin, and that
deserves Condemnation, and are by sin
obnoxious to the sentence and state of
Condemnation by the Law; but by the
grace of the Gospel, they are Justified
and Acquitted from all things from which *Act. 13.*
they could not be justified by the Law of 39.

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Moses.

Moses. God hath freed a Believer from the Sentence of Damnation; as for the Wicked Unbeliever, he is Condemned already by the sentence of the Law, and it will not be long before he be Actually and Solemnly Condemned by the sentence of the Judge. What a dreadful word is Condemnation! all the evils of this life are meer Trifles; Sickness, Pain, Poverty, are light inconsiderable things, to Everlasting Condemnation in Hell. There is but a step, a breath, between them and Eternal Flames; but as for Believers in Christ, there is no Condemnation to them; the Cloud is not so dark towards the *Egyptians*, but it is as bright towards the *Israelites*; there is nothing but Condemnation to the Unbeliever; there is Gall and Wormwood: but there is no Condemnation to the Believer, there is the Marrow and Sweetness of the Gospel; Go away rejoicing, your Sins, not your Persons, stand Condemned by Christs dying in the Flesh, for all the mischief it hath done to God, to Christ, and to you.

Rom. 8. 3.

4ly. There is a divine and all-sufficient Righteousness provided for you that Believe, for your Justification; the Gospel doth reveal a Righteousness, and that of God,

God; for your Justification. The Gospel *Rom. 1. 17.*
 doth Reveal the way how for a Sinner
 to come to Perfect Righteousness, such
 as shall make a Believer stand unblame-
 able at the Tribunal of God, even the *1 Cor. 5. 21*
 Righteousness of Christ, the Righteous-
 ness that is of God by Faith; Christ is
 made of God unto us Righteousness,
Surely shall one say, in the Lord Jehovah Isa. 45. 24.
have I Righteousness. Christ's full obe-
 dience, Active and Passive, is imputed to
 Believers for Remission of Sins, and per-
 fect Righteousness before God; and Christ
 is called, *The Lord our Righteousness. Jer. 23. 6.*
What the Law could not do in that it was *Rom. 38. 41*
weak through the Flesh, God sending his
own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and
for sin condemned sin in the flesh, that the
righteousness of the Law might be fulfilled
in us. By this Righteousness of Christ,
 we are said to be accepted in his Beloved, *Eph. 1. 6.*
 and shall be presented to God as not ha-
 ving Spot or Wrinkle; and by his Obe-
 dience made Righteous; this Righteous-
 ness is called, the Righteousness of God, *Eph. 5. 27.*
 Because, *Rom. 5. 19.*
 1. It is the Righteousness of
 him that is God and Man, that per-
 formed it for us. We are not Justified by his
 Essential Righteousness, but his *fide jussio-*
real Righteousness in fulfilling the Right-
 eousness

teousness of the Law for us. 2. And it is the Righteousness of God, because it is his gift made over by God to us.

3. 'Tis that Righteousness alone, which his strict Justice accepteth, and his ex: & Justice approveth, and will reward and Crown; and this Righteousness is contained, held forth to us, and taught in and by the Gospel, which is a Mystery unknown to the *Heathens*; obscurely taught by the Law and Prophets, but is fully revealed and offered in the Gospel, which makes the Gospel so precious to us, because it brings us such a Treasure; and the Ministers precious, that are the Earthen Vessels in which God hath laid up, and by whom he conveys this Treasure.

Joh. 3. 16. sly. God hath so loved the World, that he hath given his onely begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him, should not perish, but have Eternal Life. And as sin

Rom. 5. 21. hath reigned over man unto Death; so grace shall reign through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord. Christ hath merited Eternal Life for Believers; hence Heaven is called the purchased Possession.

Eph. 1. 14. And Eternal Life is said to be the gift of God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Rom. 8. 23. And Christ hath power given him over
Joh. 17 2. all Flesh, to give Eternal Life to as many

as

as God hath given. And Believers look Jude 21.
for the mercy of God to Eternal Life.

And the God of all grace hath called us 1 Pet. 5.
unto his eternal glory by Jesus Christ: 10.

The greatness of this gift, though it may be apprehended, it cannot be comprehended ; though we had the understanding and the Tongue of Men and Angels, we should but think as a Child, and speak as a Child, when we think and speak of it. It is a life that consists in the everlasting fruition of God ; a life of Blessedness in God, and with him, which shall last as long as God liveth ; it is a state of Life, there is the Necessity of it ; it is Eternal Life, there is the Excellency of it ; it's given, there's the Freeness of it, not merited by us ; and it is given us through Christ, there is the procuring cause of it ; and promised and purposed before the World begun, there is the fountain of it, the Electing Love of God ; it is a Life not attainable in this *Horizon*, nor calculated for this *Meridian* ; but begun here in part, and perfected in the Life to come : We are naturally in a misty Darkness about it ; but this Life and Immortality is brought to light by the Gospel, which lay hid in a great measure, in the darkness of Ignorance ;

rance; but now is clearly revealed as far as we are capable of it in this life. It is a life began here by the saving Knowledge of God in Christ, whereby we live here a life of Grace; and tho here we may be poor, miserable, afflicted, troubled; yet shall we be freed from all evil, and put into the Possession of all good, and enjoy a holy, endless, and happy life in God, and with him for ever.

The third particular, concerning this good News and glad Tidings, is the certainty of it. It is no flying uncertain report, cried up to day, and denied to morrow; 'tis not News that none can tell whence it came, and who is the Author of it; it is the Gospel of God, and of Christ; it is very necessary that men should be assured and certified that the Doctrine of the Gospel is not of man, but of God. Two Apostles have given us special assurance, it is from God. First, St. Paul, Gal. 1. 11. *Now I certifie you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me, was not after man, but Christ sent him to preach the Gospel.* And St. Peter saith, *We have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses* of

1 Cor. 1.
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of his Majesty, and heard that voice that came from the excellent glory; saying, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.* If he had said, We have not told you Fables, invented by our selves, or others, cunningly contrived, to make them appear true; but have preached nothing but what we had from Christ and God; When we made known the Power of his coming in the flesh to redeem us, and taught with wonderful Power and Authority his Gospel, and confirmed it by miracles; but were Eye-witnesses of his Glory, when transfigured, and God declared him to be his begotten Son, *in whom he was well pleased.* God himself, that cannot lye, hath avouched from Heaven Christs Doctrine, *This is Luke 9. my well beloved Son, hear him:* And Christ himself avouched; *My Doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me.* And the Evidence of Gods Spirit imprinted upon the writings of the Prophets, and the Apostles, the purity, excellency of the Gospel; they set forth the true cause of mans misery, and the perfect remedy by Christs Death; its consent with the old Scriptures, its Confirmation by Miracles, the Preservation of it from the beginning to this day, against all the Ma-

lice of men; the constant Confession of Martyrs, that have shed their blood for the Gospel of Christ; the fearful Judgments that have followed them that have opposed and persecuted the Gospel; the holiness of them that Preach and Profess the Gospel; the power and efficacy of the Gospel in Conversion, in Comforting and carrying a man to act clean contrary to his own Principles and Nature, evidence it to be from God. Hence we may conclude the certainty of it, and lay our lives upon the truth of it; it will never deceive us that rest upon its Doctrine and Promises. *'Tis a faithful saying, worthy of all acceptance, and so of faith, that Christ came into the world to save sinners.* This is called in many places a Gospel of truth. When Heaven and Earth fail, this shall abide; it is the everlasting Gospel, an everlasting Gospel for truth and continuance; when Heaven and Earth go to wrack, not one iota or tittle of these Gospel promises shall fail. *The word of the Lord endureth for ever: this is the word which by the gospel is preached to you,* 1 Pet. 1. 25.

I should now have given you the Titles by which the Gospel is dignified.

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It is the Gospel of God, the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Gospel of the Grace of God, the Gospel of Peace, the Gospel of our Salvation, the glorious Gospel of Christ, which is the means of Regeneration; the Power of God to beget us to Faith, and the Power and the Wisdom of God to them that believe; the means to enlighten us, savingly to build us up in Grace; the word of truth, of reconciliation, that begets in us a lively hope for the life to come: All these, with their Explication and Amplification, I leave to the Meditation of Christians to enlarge, and tell me whether such a Gospel as this be not a great blessing to a Nation, or Congregation, and worthy of all Acceptation.

2/y. I shall now a little insist on the second Head: The Ministers of the Gospel that are sound and faithful in the discharge of their Ministry; and let you see their usefulness, and what a blessing they are to the places where God sends them.

1. They are given by Christ, as a princely gift, at his royal Ascension into heavenly glory, where he sets upon a Throne of Majesty, to whom the whole government of the Church redeemed by his

his blood, is committed; and he hath given Ministers to the Church, for a fruit of his special love, to teach, rule, and edifie the Church as long as the World last, till the whole Mystical body of Christ be compleated and brought to the Unity of the Faith of Christ. Where observe with me four things.

*Who gave
Ministers.*

1. Who gave the Ministers to the Church? It is Christ that redeemed it by his Blood, out of his love and care to supply his Room and Office, hath ordained them. Then not to use and own them as usefull for the Church, is to be wise above Christ, and rebel against his Institution; therefore certain they are of singular use to the Church; for Christ did never institute any ordinance in vain.

2/y. Christ as God was able to teach and rule his Church, and edifie it in Grace and Faith, but would not do it immediately; but instituted an order of men that might perform this work, and promised to be with them to the end of the World. Then God will have his own Institutions observed. The Father of the Prodigal made the Servants to put on the Robe upon his Child; and God will have Ministers to help us by Faith to put on Christ.

Christ. God could have taught *Cornelius* by his Spirit, the Doctrine of the Gospel, but he would not, but bid him send for *Peter*, by whom he should hear *Acts 6.10.* words, by which he and his house should be *Acts 11.* saved. 14.

It was the good will and pleasure of God and Christ, to reveal the Mysteries of Christ and his Salvation, by men.

1. The presence of Angels would have been fearful, and so their Ministry would have been unprofitable; fear would have so disturbed the mind, that the message would not have been so attentively regarded.

2. Christ, who had honoured our nature in the assumption of it, and in performing the work of our Redemption in it, was entred upon the state of Exaltation, and could not be bodily present to Preach to the Church, which was neither expedient nor possible in all places, and therefore was willing to honour and use the Ministry of man, and to be assistant to them by his spiritual presence; so that both for the honouring of our nature, and condescending to our weakness, he hath pitched on this way to make men his Embassadors. *Poterat utiq; per Angelum omnia fieri sed ab-* *2 Cor. 5.*
jecta 20.

jesta esset humana conditio si per homines, hominibus verbum suum administrare nolle videretur, Aug. De doctrina Christiana, lib. 1. præfat.

3. And lastly, that the Message, rather than the Messengers, should be regarded; and if any thing be effected, it might be given to the Power of God, and not unto the means, 2 Cor. 4. 7. *We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power might be of God, and not of men.* * If he had not sent it in earthen Vessels, but by some glorious Angels, men would have left the thing, and have worshipped the Person, Rev. 22. 8. or if any thing had been wrought, the Messenger, not God, should have had the glory of it. I will make mention of the Treasure laid up in these earthen Vessels. Now I am considering them as the gift of Christ; in other places they are called the gift of God. *I will give them Pastors after my own heart, that shall feed my people with knowledge and understanding; and they are the gift of the Holy Ghost. Look to the flock of Christ, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, 20. 28.* Now if a faithful Ministry be the gift of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; gi-
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ven in love to the Souls of men, in order to their Salvation, and an effect of Christs love and care in particular after his Ascension, moreover the Application of the fruits and benefits of Christs Redemption; Then next to the giving of Christ and his Spirit, 'tis the greatest gift in the World. Look upon it as an effect of Gods electing love to his elect, as a fruit of Christs redeeming love to his Church, and a fruit of the Holy Spirits love, that he may be a comforter to the elect in Gods due time.

2ly. Having considered the giver, we will *what is* now consider the gift; and surely 'tis no *given.* small gift, that all three persons challenge a propriety in the Donation, and which is given for so excellent an end, as you shall hear. The gift is the Ministry it self, the Ministers, the Office and Gifts. Some Ministers were given as Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists: Ministers extraordinary, to lay the foundation of the Church, and raise the frame of the Church; other Ministers, that are ordinary Ministers, as Pastors, and Teachers, are to continue until the end of the World, to build upon the Foundation laid by the Apostles, and to carry on the work unto perfection; and gave both to the Church.

Church. The ordinary and perpetual Ministers of the Church are the gift of Christ as well as the other ; And a gift of wonderful love, usefulness, and necessity to the Church. Of wonderful love ; for God calling his people to Repentance, commands them to Repent ; and then tells them what he will give them , *Jer. 3. 15.* Pastors according to his own heart, that may feed them with Knowledge and Understanding ; they were now in Captivity, in great Bondage, but if they would Repent and turn to God, they should return to their own Land, to *Zion*, and there as the height of all the Mercy they should enjoy, he would give them Pastors after his own heart, such as he did like and approve of, such as should Teach and Govern them according to his Will, such as should feed them with Knowledge and Understanding ; which as our *English* Annotations observe, relates to the manner or matter of their Teaching ; they should first in a skilful manner teach and rule the Church with integrity of heart , and skilfulness of Understanding ; they should not be Ministers ignorant, nor scandalous, the scorn and reproach of a Church ; nor men of Knowledge, and free from Crimes, nor unsanctified

unsanctified persons, whose practice might
 ruine more than their Doctrine saves; but
 such as were truly skillful in the Word
 of Righteousness, and holy in Life. *Holy in life*
 Secondly, They should teach the People
 sound Knowledge, and a right understand-
 ing of Gods Truth; and as the Gospel
 Ministers do with more abundant Light
 Reveal the Divine Grace, this is a choice
 mercy indeed, Ministers whose Light and
 Life shall evidence them to be sent of God;
 and the Lord doth upbraid the unthank-
 ful people with this favour. *Since the*
day your Fathers came out of Egypt, I Jer. 7. 25
have unto this day sent unto you all my
Servants the Prophets, daily rising up ear-
ly, and sending them, yet you hearkned not
to me, nor inclined your ear. And it is
the special token of Gods love, as Paul
witneseth, who urgeth it on the hearts
of the Jews, Men and Brethren, to you
is the word of this Salvation sent. Act. 13.
26. which he would have them to ac-
knowledge and make use of.

The usefulness and necessity of a godly
 Ministry sets forth the excellency of this
 Gift, for it is the ordinary means to pro-
 cure our Salvation; it is the standing Or-
 dinance whereby Christ is made known,
 in whose Name alone Salvation is to be
 had,

had, to beget and confirm Faith; of which more by and by. It is the means of making known *the unsearchable riches of Christ*, Ephes. 3. 8. Such Riches as may draw the heart to wonder; but it self is such an Unsearchable; *eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor did it ever enter into the heart of man to conceive how great the things are, God hath prepared for his people.* And by them he makes known the Riches of his glorious grace in the Redemption by Christ, which is, Christ among them, in them, the hope of Glory; and they bring an inestimable Treasure with them: the richest Ship that comes from the *Indies* Laden with Gold and Silver, brings not such a Treasure as the Gospel doth; we have this Treasure in Earthen Vessels; the Ministers are they that bring this Merchandise, that which they bring and enstate us in, is a very great Treasure; 1. For the matter; the unsearchable Riches of Christ and his Grace. 2. A Treasure consists in things of Worth and Value, of highest account in the World. A company of Pebbles, and worthless Things are not a Treasure; but of Gold, Silver, Diamonds, and precious Stones, which will enrich a man, and make him live like a Prince all the World

2 Cor. 4. 7.

1. For the Matter.

2. Worth.

World over : Thus the Ministers bring with them the Doctrine of the Gospel of Reconciliation with God in Christ, and offers Christ, the Pearl of Price, which a Wise Merchant Trading for Heaven will buy what ever it cost ; which if a man hath, he is made for ever ; if a man have all the World, without him it is nothing ; and if he hath nothing in the World but Christ, he is a happy man ; by the Gospel which they Preach, Life and Immortality is brought to Light, and Sealed up to Believers.

3ly. A Treasure consists in variety, abundance, plurality. 'Tis not one thing of worth, but many, that makes up a Treasure ; and if in few things, yet much worth is comprehended in them ; so in the Gospel God enricheth us with all Spiritual Blessings, in Heavenly Places in Christ Jesus ; and gives us such a Treasure of all needful Blessings, that if we had the World full of Diamonds, and all precious Things the Earth affords, piled up to the very Stars, it were but a heap of Dung compared with it.

4. 'Tis a Treasure for closeness, lock'd up in the Cabinet of the Gospel ; and the Ministry is a Golden Key, to unlock this Treasury, and Cabinet, and not onely to

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expose

expose it to our view, but to give it to us, and Possess us of it; 'tis not Revealed to all, what Treasure is there, and where the Gospel is Preach'd; Worldly Men get no sight of it; though it be revealed to them in the Letter of the Word, yet it is a hidden Treasure to them, till God by his Spirit open their Eyes, to see the things that are freely given them of God; being such a Treasure, we should highly value it. And by the Preaching of Ministers, God offers Christ, and all this hearty Treasure to us.

And where ever God hath a People to call to Salvation, there he sends his Ministers whom he appoints to stay there, till his Work he sent them thither for, be finished; and then he will send them elsewhere. When Paul was at Corinth, and testified to the Jews, that Jesus was Christ, *Act. 18. 6, 9.* and so on; they opposed and Blasphemed; he shook his Raiment against them, and said, *your blood be upon your own head;* and purposed to turn to the Gentiles; but the Lord suffered him not, but caused him to stay there a Year and six Months still, and bids him, *be not afraid, hold not thy peace, for I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee:*

thee : for I have much people in this City.

Where God hath much people that belong to him, he will continue his Ministers there against all opposition; and when their work is done, pack them away. When *Paul* and *Timothy* had gone through *Phrygia* and *Gallatia*, they were forbidden by the Holy Ghost to Preach in *Asia*, *Act. 16. 6, 9.* And they would have gone to *Bythinia*, and the Spirit suffered them not. And then at *Tross* a Vision in the Night appeared to *Paul*; *There stood a man of Macedonia and prayed him, saying, Come over unto Macedonia and help us.* Gathering thereby, assuredly God had called him thither.

Which direction of them by the Spirit to some places, and restraining them from other; argued, that God hath the disposal of the means of Grace, carrying them to such as the Lord hath purposed to Call; and they go not, but God hath some to Call there, for they carry the Word of Salvation with them. Hence it is the greatest Blessing that God bestoweth on a People; and on the contrary, when God deprives a people of it, it is the greatest Curse, such as God in his anger sends upon a people whom he means to plague, as in the sequel of this Dis-

course shall appear. Now that you may the better understand this Blessing, and the greatness of the loss in the deprivation of it, I will in the next place shew you some of the Chief Titles that God gives to the Ministers of the Gospel, by which their worth and usefulness may appear. Therefore,

3ly. *what Titles are given to Ministers.*

3ly. God is pleased to Attribute to his Ministers many Worthy Names and Titles, both to mind them of their duty, and let the people see of what worth and use they are in the World; they are called Pastors, Teachers, Men of God, Witnesses of Christ, Planters, Builders, Husbandmen, Angels, Apostles, Watchmen, Stewards of Gods House, the Salt of the Earth, the Lights of the World, Stars, fellow Labourers, and co-workers with God, Embassadors for Christ, Friends of the Bridegroom, Shepherds over the Flock of Christ, and Soldiers of Christ; Overseers and Admonishers of his People. Neither of these Titles but would furnish us with much Matter, to shew the Transcendent worth of a godly Ministry: I will not run through all, but pick out a few of the most Eminent.

1. They are called, *The Salt of the Earth.* Thus saith Christ to the Apostles, and the succeeding

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succeeding Ministers of Christ, *Ye are Mat. 5. 13.*
the salt of the earth: if the salt hath lost
its savour, wherewith shall it be seasoned, it
is good for nothing but to be cast out, and
trodden under foot of men. This Christ
 spake to the Apostles, those great Tea-
 chers of the Gospel, that laid the Foun-
 dation of the Christian Church, the
 Dispensers of the lively Oracles of God,
 and their Successors. I have given you
 Ministerial Gifts, Sanctified and fitted
 you for the Ministry, given you to be
 Pastors of my Church, to feed them with
 your Doctrine and Example, that the
 World might be preserved and purged
 from Corruption by the Salt of your
 Ministry, and seasoned with Righteouls-
 ness and Holiness, and so made accepta-
 ble to God; as Meat is kept from stink-
 ing and putrefaction by Salt, and made sa-
 voury to Man's Taste.

First, Now Salt hath a Twofold pro-
 perty; first Acrimony and sharpness, by
 which the Redundant Blood is suck'd up,
 and kept from stinking, and putrefacti-
 on.

Secondly, It makes the Meat to eat sa-
 voury. So the Salt of the Ministry hath
 these two properties,

1. Sharpness in Reproof. The Minister

must to them that are in the state of Sin, and live wickedly *ἐλέγχων αὐτοὺς ὑποκόμους* *Titus* 1. 13, Convince, Reprove, Check them sharply, cut them to the quick; It is a Metaphor taken from Surgeons, who Cut, and Launch, and Sear to the Quick, if the Quality, or Wound, or Sore require it; and in some cases to Cut off a dangerous Limb, or putrefied Member: and the end of this Reproof is, That they may be sound in the Faith, that the grace of Faith may be sound, and the Doctrine of Faith kept sound: let him convincingly, soundly Evidence to the Sinner in the State of Nature, his Dead State, that the ignorant may know it, the Dead Heart feel it, the contradicting cavilling heart be Silenced; and in open notorious Sins, known and committed, unmask the sin, lay the sin bare-faced before him, that it may appear the more odious and ugly to the understanding and judgment of the sinner.

2ly. He must follow it with the Curse of the Law, denounce the Judgment of God against the sin and Sinner, if he seasonably Repent not, that there may follow the renting of the heart, and breaking up of the fallow ground of the Heart, that it may receive the Seed of the Gos-

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pel to be cast into it, that the sinner may become sound in the Faith; this is the Salt that must be in his Doctrine: I will pass by the Salt of Discipline, when he hath shewed the sinner his Corrupt State, and abominable Works. *Psal. 14. 1.*

2. He must with savoury words, and carriage win them to Christ. Words of the Gospel applyed to the humble and penitent Sinner; revive and cheer his heart with shewing him the Righteousness of Christ provided for him, and so convincingly pursue him with the need of this Righteousness till he accept it, and make him sensible he needs Christ for Holiness and Sanctification as well as Pardon, that he may present him acceptable to God, through Jesus Christ; and that without this Righteousness of Christ, and holiness of Heart and Life, they will be as stinking Carrion in the Nostrils of Almighty God; and such a savoury Ministry is more Effectual to season mens hearts with grace, God concurring with it, than Salt to season Meat and make it savoury, fit to eat. Salt keeps Meat for a long time: but the salt of the Ministry preserves them for Eternity. Salt keeps the Meat that is sweet, free from stinking and putrefaction; this Salt makes them that are

already stinking and abominable in the Nostrils of God, to recover sweetness, and make them savoury Christians. Hence it appears, how deplorable a condition a people are in, without a savoury Ministry.

2ly. They are said to be the lights of the World, Matt. 5. 14. *Ye are the lights of the world*; so they are, and should be in Doctrine, and life-convincing Preachers, and men of convincing lives, as Christ testifieth of *John*, as a burning and shining light; burning in his Life, shining in his Doctrine. Light is not less necessary to men, than Salt to meat; there were no discerning of any thing in the dark, of the goodness or badness of it; no going about the business that concerns us in this Life; no avoiding in the dark the dangerous Pits and Precipices that threaten our ruin. Without light all the World would be a dark Dungeon, a confused Chaos; we shall see no difference between Gold and Brass, Silver and Tin, and we should spend our time in Idleness, in thick darkness; for if we did stir, we could not walk in safety without danger. So

1. Without the light of the Ministry, the World lieth in Darkness, Ignorance, Error, Sin and Misery, as it's said of

Galilee,

Galilee, Matt. 4. 16. The people that sat in darkness, saw a great light; yea, tho they had Priests, yet they sat in darkness and shadow of Death. A blind Ministry is as good as none.

2. Without the light of the word, we should have no saving Knowledge of God and Jesus Christ; and yet this is life Eternal; to know *God, and Jesus Christ* *John 17. whom he hath sent.*

3. There is no going about the work of our Salvation, without a light from the word; there is no discerning of the Creator from the Creature, the works of God from the Devil, between spiritual food and poyson, nor find out the way that leads to Heaven, nor avoid the way that leads to Hell. How are the blind *Pagans* led by Satan, as captive Prisoners in the chains of ignorance, nor knowing whicher they are going till they come to Hell it self! and they are led by the Prince of Darkness, to the place of Eternal Darkness, and there is none to deliver them out of the hand of the Destroyer: we might as well spare the Sun out of the Heavens, as the Gospel out of a Land. Nay, the Gospel Ministry is more useful to us, than the light of the Sun is to us in the World.

1. This

1. This External Light gives us only a *medium* to see things by an external Light; but it cannot enlighten the blind, and such as have no sight; the Light of the *Sun* is of no use to them; but to them that have eyes, they have benefit by it; but the Gospel Light, does not only give a light and shine in a dark place, but it gives sight to the blind. Hence *Paul* was sent to *open the eyes of the blind, and turn them from darkness to light*, *Act. 26. 18. Psal. 19 8. The Commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes.*

2. This Light of the *Sun* is sometimes gone when the *Sun* is set and gone down; but this Light indures for ever; and if the Ministry be removed, the Light set up in the Soul, shall never be Extinguished: what a woful State are they in, that want this Light, or have lost it! such are in worse case than the *Egyptians* that sate in darkness, whilst the *Israelites* in *Goshen* sate in Light.

3. What a lamentable case it is, that a Kingdom is given to us, and prepared for us, by the Death of Christ; and men being blind of themselves, and not able to see one foot of the way, and yet have no Ministers or Guides to help them one step forward, ~~but~~ as blind men, desperately run upon Pikes and Swords, into Bits and Ponds,

Ponds, no one recalling them from present death, and that deadly danger they are falling into !

3ly. Ministers are called Stars, *Rev. 3. 1.* Thus saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven Stars, that is, the Ministers of the seven Churches of Asia. *Rev. 1. last.* The seven stars, are the Angels of the seven Churches, the Ministers of the seven Churches.

1. The Stars do serve to direct the Travellers by night at Sea, or Land ; it is a great help to the poor Mariners in Storms and in stress of Weather, to have star-light to steer their Course by, in a dark Night, especially near Land. When Paul, and they that Sailed with him, in many days saw neither Sun nor Star ; all hope of being saved was gone, *Act. 27. 20.* They knew not what to do, not a Star to be seen. So Ministers are Stars to guide, direct, and lead men to Christ ; as the Star did the Wise Men at the Birth of Christ ; and when they had the star that went before them all the way ; and stood over where Christ was, they rejoiced at the sight with exceeding great joy : Oh what joy is it to a poor dark ignorant People, to have a godly Minister set up near by them to guide them to Christ !

but

but when the stars disappear, and no Minister to direct and guide them, how doleful is their state !

2/y. The Stars give a great Light ; and when a man is walking in the Night, or riding far from home, and is willing to come home, it is as dark as pitch, how doth he stumble and grope, and Ride in fear ! how uncomfortable doth he go, or ride ! but if the Stars begin to shine, then he cheers up, goes comfortably on ; I shall through the blessing of God, saith he, get home well at last. So when there is no Star-Light, Ministerial Light shining, to guide a man in the Night of Ignorance, in the dark place where he lives, he doth not see how to be godly, how to order his Conversation ; he doth grope, and stumble, and fall in, and cannot clearly discover his way, and thinks he shall perish for want of Light, never come to Heaven at last ; but when God gives him a bright shining Star, in the Parish where he lives, that he hath some to guide him, what a comfort is it to such a man !

3/y. Stars are not without a secret Influence upon these Inferior Bodies. Hence we read of the sweet Influences of the *Pleiades*, and the bands of *Orion*. *Job 38.*

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31. The *Pleiades* rising in the *Spring*, by their sweet Influences of moisture, make the Earth fruitful ; and *Orion* rising in *December*, doth make Frost, Snow, and Hail. The Stars have a great Influence upon Elementary Bodies ; in the *Spring*, Herbs grow, Trees begin to put forth Leaves and Plants do begin to wax green ; and when *Orion* comes, it pincheth the Bodies of Men and Plants with its Cold. So good Ministers are like the *Pleiades* ; if Men have any desire to be good, and serve God, coming under the influences of the Gospel *Pleiades*, what a spring of grace appears ! what Gospel dew do there then fall, that makes the soul to fructify in grace ! the understanding lightned, the heart quickned, the affections stirred, and in due time a saving Conversion is brought on. But bad Ministers are like *Orion* ; the coldness of their Preaching, the looseness of their Life, coldly delivering the Word, as if it would freeze in their Mouths ; they do not feel any warmth in the matter, they Preach upon their own heart, and have no Goads to fasten in the Assembly, no Bowels of Compassion, but Preach the Word dreamingly ; no affectionateness in the Preacher ; so that People sit as quietly under their Sermons, as if they

they were hearing of a Tale : there is no Preaching, as if Hell and Damnation were at their backs ; they hear but little of matters of Life and Death, of Salvation and Damnation ; and if the matter be weighty, if coldly set off, and delivered, yet they will not be affected with it any more, than with a Sword in the hand of a Child.

4ly. The Ministers are called Angels. *The seven stars are the Angels of the seven Churches.* That is, the Ministers of the seven Churches ; and thus Christ directs his Epistles, *To the Angel of the Church of Ephesus : The Angel of the Church of Smyrna : and so to the rest, &c.*

1. Angels are Spirits, *He maketh his angels spirits,* Psal. 104. 4. They are spiritual Creatures, their natures are spiritual, their employment spiritual, their delights spiritual, affections spiritual ; no Creature bears such a conformity to God, as they. So Ministers should be spiritual men ; Christians are called spiritual men, *If any be overtaken with a fault, let them that are spiritual restore such a man with the spirit of meekness.* But Ministers especially, must be spiritual men ; the Prophet gives such a Title to Ministers, *Hosea 9. 7. The spiritual man is mad.* Ministers are and ought to be spiritually

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spiritual, filled with the gifts and graces of the spirit, their Preaching should be spiritual, their conversation spiritual, their discourse spiritual, their ends spiritual; and when Ministers are such, they are as Angels in their places, and they will endeavour to make their people spiritual, and draw them from their carnal Courses, making them to savour and relish the things of the Spirit; and such men will have a mighty influence to make a people spiritual, and then the Work of God will go on amain.

Secondly Angels are holy Creatures; when Christ shall come to Judge the World, *he shall come in the glory of the Father, with all the holy Angels with him; and Ministers should be holy, blameless, unreprouable, * Patterns of holiness, ensamples of the Flock.* 1 Pet. 5. 3. And such a one Paul enjoyns Timothy to be, *an example of Believers in word and conversation-purity.* 1 Tim. 4. 12. Now when a Minister is holy in Life, and Preaches by his Life, as well as his Doctrine; and makes it his design to advance Holiness in his people, without which they shall never see God; what a mercy is it to live, under such a Ministry!

Thirdly,

Thirdly, They are heavenly Creatures; hence they are called; *the heavenly Host*, *Luk. 2. 13.* And are said to be in heaven, *Matt. 24. 36.* there they dwell: so should Ministers be men of another World, of a Heavenly Conversation. The Preaching of the Gospel is called, the Kingdom of Heaven; and Ministers should be men of heavenly hearts and lives; and when they preach heavenly, pray heavenly, live heavenly, study to make their people heavenly, that they may not go to heaven alone, carry their people with them; what a blessed condition are they in, that are under such a Ministry!

Fourthly, Angels are excellent Creatures, of no mean Extraction and Employment; there are two great Offices they have performed to many; They came down from Heaven gladly to make known *Luk. 2. 10,* to men the tidings of a Saviour; and their Message was, *Behold, we bring you tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people; for unto you is born this day a Saviour in the city of David, which is Christ the Lord.* 2. Their Office is to be *Ministring Spirits for the good of them that are heirs of salvation, Heb. 1. 14.* So verily, the Office of a Minister is no mean Office, of a heavenly rise; about no mean

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mean Employment ; his Office relates not to the External Peace with men, as to peace with God ; not to an External Government, but to an inward Government of the Soul ; not in relation to this life only, but in order to a better ; the Angels never had a greater Errand or Message, than to Publish the Birth of Christ, and Salvation by him ; and this is the Ministers Employment, and that not for once, but all his life-time. And as the Angels are Minist'ring Spirits for the good of the Elect, so are Ministers, all their gifts are for the perfecting the Saints, for the work of the Ministry, for the edifying the Body of Christ, *Eph. 4. 11, 12.* that the Elect may be gathered, edified, and saved ; what a glorious Employment is this ! let people then look upon Ministers not as base men, of little use ; but if they be Spiritual, Holy, Heavenly men in Life and Doctrine, Revealing Christ and Salvation by him to the World, and sent by Christ for the Salvation of the Elect, receive them as *so many Angels, yea as Christ Jesus himself ; as the Galatians did Paul, Gall. 4. 14.*

5. Ministers are called Ambassadors for Christ, *2 Cor. 5. 20.* and Gods Ambassadors,

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bassadors,

Ambassadors : and they are the greatest Ambassadors that ever were, or can be. Ambassadors of Earthly Princes they have a great Commission, and represent the Kings that send them ; alas what are they, to these ? they come about petty, low, trivial things comparatively to the Gospel Ambassadors ; they Treat of Civil War, or Peace ; but alas, Ministers, if they be not Lord Ambassadors, as they are not, but mean men ; yet they are the Lords Ambassadors ; what is wanting in their Persons, is made up in their Masters Greatness that sends them whose Ambassadors they are ; and the greatness of the Message, will overballance the meanness of the Messenger ; they come to Treat of Peace between God and man ; or of open Hostility between the Creator, and the Creatures. There is a quarrel depending between God and man ; open acts of Hostility on each side ; man is no match for God, yet for mans good he seeks, and sues for Peace ; gave his Son to shed his Blood to purchase it, and now sends Ministers to treat of Peace and Reconciliation with him ; they bring you the Articles of Peace Signed by the God of Heaven, which he offereth to you. He hath made his Ministers

niffers Plenipotentiaries, having figned their Commiffion, and given them Power to Treat and Conclude an Inviolable Peace between God and Men, that fubmit to thefe Articles of Peace. Now in their Mafter's Name, who is King of Kings, Lord of Lords, whole Vaffals and Feudaries all the Princes of the Earth are, they come; befeeching, though they might command you, to be Reconciled to God. You are, and have been Rebels from the Womb, Enemies to God in your minds, through Evil Works; you are Apoftate Rebels againft your Maker, lived in open Defiance againft him; as long as your Sins remain, you can expect no Peace; if you Repent and Believe, you may have Peace; and God will be as good friends, as if you had not offended; if you will not hearken, and fubmit, you fhall Dye and be Damned for ever; if ye do, you fhall be happy to Eternity. This is the Message God hath fent; was there ever fuch an Embaffage as this is? and what a mercy is it, that God calls not his Ambaffadors home, continues the Treaty! Now in this your day, know the things that belong to your Peace, before they be hid from your Eyes. Oh confider, and flight not this offer, and

see what a mercy it is, that God continues by his Ministers to offer to you Reconciliation.

Sixthly, They are called Watchmen. *Ezek. 3. 17.* Son of man, I have made thee a watchman to the house of Israel. Obey them that have the Rule over you, and submit your selves, for they watch for your souls as they that must give account, Heb. 13.

17. that is, for the Souls loss, or what they did to prevent it. The Souls of men are of infinite worth, breathed by God at first into the body, created since, and infused into the body organized; Christ gave his Life to Redeem them, and God hath ordained a Ministry, and appointed Ministers as Watchmen over them, for their good. The souls of men are in danger, and there is nothing in the world so beset as the soul of man; *Satan* is a cruel and vigilant Adversary, that seeks its ruine in the World; innumerable Snares are laid for it, wicked men, and society with them, do much endanger it; and amongst all the souls enemies, there is none worse, and a greater enemy to it, than himself, and the sin that lyeth in his own bosom; therefore there must be Watchmen to discover the danger, the deceits of *Satan* and his instruments,
and

and of our own Hearts. As a City Be-
leagured, for safeties-sake, and policies-
sake, hath her Watchmen to descry and
discover the danger ; so God seeth it fit,
the soul of man should have Watchmen
for the good of the soul, and this cal-
ling is as necessary as to have Nurses to
watch with sick people ; or Shepherds,
to watch their sheep, to defend them
against Wolves ; or as Watchmen in a
City to prevent danger.

And if the Magistrates Office be ne-
cessary, as indeed it is ; much more the
Ministry. *That serves to maintain outward*
peace, propriety, and title to our out-
ward Estates ; but Ministers are appoin-
ted for the present Edification, and fu-
ture Salvation of the Soul. He that be-
lieves not this, deserves to live and dye
an Infidel.

7ly. Ministers are called Stewards,
1 Cor. 4. 1. *Let a man account of us, as*
ministers of Christ, and stewards of the my-
steries of God. Tit. 1. 2. A Bishop must
be blameless, as the Steward of God ;
God is a great householder, and his
Church is his House, where as a great
person, he keepeth his residence more
stately than any Kings in their Courts ;
which he ruleth by his Spirit, working in

his Word and Ministry. As a Noble man, or a Prince, hath his Steward; So God being Infinitely greater, and his House larger, hath more Stewards to order and govern his House according to his mind, to his Honour and Advantage. Now the Stewards of God are his Ministers, whose Office is,

First, To dispence all necessities to the Family, according to the allowance and liking of their Lord, that all may have a necessary, full and suitable supply, and none of his Lords allowance withheld, which were to play the thief. So all Ministers, whom God sends and approves of, must dispence the word according to the severall necessities of the Church, delivering nothing but what God would have him speak, and withholding no part of that Counsel, that he may be free from the blood of all, that none dye for want of Meat, or the Lords allowance.

2ly. As he must, according to the power given, dispence the Word; So he hath the Keys, to open and shut the house, to lock and unlock, to admit or exclude out of the house; for so it is said of *Eliakim*, *Isa. 22. 22*. So Ministers have the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, to open and shut Heaven, bind and loose, to remit and

and retain sins, *Mark 16. 19.*

3. The Steward is not to be there, as Lord of the house, and freeholder; but is to be accountable to his Lord, and give up his Bills monthly, or quarterly, or whensoever his Lord shall call him; so must a Minister be accountable for his Talents and Trust, and how he hath dispensed his Masters goods; so must Ministers give account; *They watch for your souls as they that must give account.* Now as *Heb. 13. 17.*

a great House that hath many Servants and Officers in it, who must be provided for, and therefore a Steward is necessary for the well-being, and ordering of it; So are the Ministers Gods Stewards, which should be wise and faithful, necessary for the Church; not that God could not provide for them immediately, but he will do it by their means as effectually, seeing it more fit for the Church, or Families use, to do it by Stewards, rather than himself immediately.

8 They are Gods *Husbandmen*, and the Church is Gods Husbandry or Tillage; and they are Gods Ploughmen, Labourers, Seeds-men, to Plough, Sow, Cast in the Seed, Harrow the Ground, that the Church, the Lords Field, may bring forth fruit, and a plentiful Harvest, without

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which

1 Cor.
3. 9.

which the Ground, without which Culture and Tillage the Land would be over-run with Thorns, Weeds, Nettles; and be as unfruitful, even as the barren Wilderness. So the Ministers must, as Gods Husbandmen, Plough up the fallow ground of mens hearts, rid out the Thorns of worldly cares, and whatever is sinful, and sow the precious seed of the Gospel, that the seed may spring up to eternal Life; and without the Ministry, the heart of man would be like the barren Wilderness, and all manner of ungodliness abound, as it is on places where there is not a settled Ministry; now as Ploughmen and Seedsmen are necessary, or we should have no Bread to eat; So are Ministers, or else we should fall short of the Bread of Life, that is needful to the Salvation of the Soul.

Now I am come to the 4th Particular,
 4. For 4ly. We shall consider the end of God
what end in appointing the Ministry of the word,
Ministers which will abundantly shew the necessity
are given. and usefulness of it. You may see the
 end, in *Eph. 4. 12.* it is for the making
 up of the Mystical Body of Christ, till we
 all come to the unity of the Faith of
 Christ, which will not be till this Life is
 ended.

ended. The Church may be considered three ways, as *Diodate* observes, 1. As a Sacred Commonwealth. 2. As a Spiritual Temple. 3. As a Mystical Body consisting of the Head and Members; and so you shall see a threefold use.

1. That men by the Preaching of the Word, may be fitted by the Instruction of the Word, to be joyned to the Church, and kept in Communion with the Saints, which is necessary for us; for as out of the Ark all were drowned; So all perish out of the Church, that are neither of the Invisible nor Visible Church; and the Word is the means by which new Members are added to it.

2. That the Church, in which God dwells as an Invisible Temple, might be taught how to know, Worship and Serve God aright; for God must be worshipped according to his own Will, the Scripture reveals it, the Minister expounds and explains it.

3. That the Invisible Church or Mystical Body of Christ truly so called, consisting of Christ the Head, and all true Believers as the Members, may be gathered, united to Christ, grow, increase in Grace and Faith, and in all Grace, till it is fitted for a translation into Heaven.

This

This in the General.

In particular take it thus, tho I mean not to insist largely on all Particulars. There are these Nine Ends or Effects of the Gospels Preaching: Illumination, Conviction, Conversion, Regeneration, Faith, Edifying in Grace, Consolation, Preservation of the Saints, and of the Doctrine of the Christian Religion.

1. The World is Blind and Ignorant, and know not God, and the true way to eternal Life; the Scripture is a light that shineth in a dark place, to which we must attend till the day-Star arise in our hearts; but all cannot read; and all that read, understand it not, and need an Interpreter, as the *Eunuch* confess; therefore God hath appointed the Ministry as a standing Ordinance, *To open the eyes of the blind, and turn them from darkness to light, and so from the power of Satan to God, Acts 26. 18.* Hence the Ministers are called the Lights of the World; and the places set in great darkness, where the Gospel Ministry is not settled.

2. The Preaching of the word serves for Conviction; 'tis powerful for Conviction; for the Sword of the Spirit is quick

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quick and powerful, a sharp and two-edged sword, piercing, even to the dividing asunder of the soul and spirit, and of the joynts and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart, Heb. 4.

12. One part of the work of the Ministry is to convince the World of sin, which the Spirit doth in and by the Ministry; the Word opening their eyes, to see their lost undone State, and see the vileness of their ways; thus the *Jews* *Acts 2.* were convicted by *Peters* Ministry in crucifying Christ. And *Felix* is made to tremble whilest *Paul* reasoned of Righteousness, Temperance, Judgment to come; the Prisoner at the Bar, made the Judge on the Bench tremble; and thus when the Ministers Preach faithfully, if an unbeliever come in, *he is convinced of all, judged of all, 1 Cor. 14. 24.*

3. The Word is a powerful means to Conversion. Conviction is one thing, Conversion is another; sometimes some are convinced, and have no change wrought in them; but Conversion is a thorough work, accompanied with a change, and renewing the heart, whereby a man is not only *turned from darkness to light, but from the power of Satan to God, Acts 26. 18.* So that Conversion makes

makes a powerful and saving change; the man is not the same he was; the Word works not necessarily Conversion, as the Fire doth necessarily burn; but by Institution; of itself it works no more than Exhortation to a dead man: but God hath promised to be with his Ministers; and when he sets, there is no resisting of that work, but effectual Conversion followeth.

4. The Word is powerful unto Regeneration. This is the same thing in effect under another notion; it notes the work of Grace in a mans heart; whereby, as a principle of life infused, a man doth really, actively turn from all sin to God; so that actual Conversion is a fruit of passive Conversion and Regeneration. Now the Instrument of this Regeneration is the word Preached. *Of his own will begat he us by th^e word of truth*, Jam. 1. 18. And *St. Paul* speaks of the *Corinthians*, *He had begotten them in Christ Jesus, through the Gosp^l*, 1 Cor. 4. 15. And the word is the seed of Regeneration. Believers are begotten by the incorruptible Seed of Gods Word, 1 Pet. 1. 23. Therefore the Word is necessary, without which it is not ordinarily wrought; without Regeneration there is no Salvation ordinarily;

narily; without the Word Preached, there is no Regeneration.

5. The Word is powerful to beget Faith; for *faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God preached, Rom. 10. 17.* And the Gospel preach'd is the Power of God through Faith unto Salvation; and by which, God brings men to Faith ordinarily; without Hearing Faith is not wrought; 'tis God works Faith, but Preaching is the standing Ordinance to bring men to faith. *Paul* and *Apollos* are instruments by whom men believe, the Influences of the Heavens make a Fruitful Season, yet Plowing and Sowing is necessary. Faith is the spirits efficacy, but the Word is the means whereby it is conveyed.

6. Edifying in Grace, is by the Ministry of the Word. When the Foundation-stone is laid, there is a superstructure yet behind, called *the edifying of the body of Christ, Ephes. 4. 12.* The *Thessalians* were eminent Christians, yet there was something wanting in their Faith, and therefore *Paul* prayed night and day to see their faces, that he might perfect their Faith; and the Word is
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the Word of God's grace, which is able to build up a Believer, which *Paul* commended the Elders of *Ephesus* to, when he was to leave them, *Act.* 20. 32.

7. The Word Preached is a powerful means of Consolation, and able to comfort the heart of a Christian. And the Ministry of the Word is effectual, when God sets in with it to comfort, quiet, pacifie the heart and conscience of a Christian; *God createth the fruit of* *Isa.* 57. 19. *the lips peace*; makes the Ministers lips oftentimes to seal peace. Thus *Paul* desires to see the *Colossians*, and preach to them, *that their hearts might be comforted*, *Coloss.* 2. 2. Thus *Paul* Exhorted and Comforted the *Thessalonians*, *1 Thess.* 2. 11. *And he sent Timothy a Minister of the Gospel to establish and comfort them*, *1 Thess.* 3. 2. *God is the God of all comfort and consolation*; yet he useth his Ministers as instruments in the work. *Paul* sent *Tychicus* to the *Colossians*, *that he might know their estate, and comfort their hearts*, *Colos.* 4. 8.

8. The Word is powerful by the Ministry, to settle, establish a man in the Faith, in the grace of Faith, and Doctrine of it, against all opposition. Hence the end of the ministry is said to be, *that we*
may

may henceforth be no more children, tossed up and down with every wind of doctrine, by the slight of men and cunning craftiness whereby they lye in wait to deceive, Eph. 4. 14. And hence the Apostle Exhorts the Christian Hebrews, Be not carried away with divers strange doctrines, for it is a good thing the heart be established with grace; and the preaching of the Word is the means to settle us, and bring us to the full assurance of understanding, Col. 2. 2.

9. As it is the means to beget the grace of Faith, so to increase it, and establish the heart in it; and the Minister commends them unto God in prayer to keep them that are Saints, in his Name: And so Paul did commend the Elders of Ephesus to God, Act. 20. 32. *Who is able to keep them from falling, Jude 24, &c.* Now lay this together, seeing the preaching of the Word is so powerful for Illumination, Conviction, Conversion, Regeneration; to beget men to the Faith, build them up in it, comfort them; it from hence infallibly follows, That of all things in the world, a faithful Ministry is the greatest blessing.

Having laid this Foundation, and been so large in shewing, what an excellent Blessing

Blessing a faithful Ministry is ; I may be more brief in the handling of the Second Question, which is,

Quest. 2. *What a fearful sore Judgment it is, when God takes away a powerful sound Ministry from a Nation, or particular Congregation.*

Ans. That it is a very sore Judgment, appears, by undeniable consequence ; for *Contrariorū eadem est ratio, vel consequentia* ; if it be the greatest blessing God can bless a Nation with, it is the sorest Judgment he can inflict, to remove it, or deny it to any people ; you shall find in *Isa. 30. 18, 19, 20.* that God did wait to be gracious to *Israel*, and promised to dwell in *Zion*, and they should weep no more ; that he would be very gracious to them at the voice of their cry ; when he shall hear it, he will answer it : And wherein was this mercy God would shew them ? why, when God should return their Captivity, though he did feed with Bread of Adversity, and Water of Affliction, such as those have that are shut up in Prison, or in a strait Siege, who have a stinted allowance, and that of the meanest food, or drink ; though this may be
your

your Portion as to your outward state : yet shall not thy Teachers be removed into a corner, but thine Eyes shall see thy Teachers, and thine Ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, *This is the way, walk in it.* This shall be thy comfort, thou shalt enjoy a standing Ministry, which shall sweeten the bread of Affliction, and this shall be Bread to you in your Adversity, and Water to you in your Affliction; your outward wants shall be made up in Spiritual Enjoyments.

And if a standing Ministry, enjoyment of Teaching Ministers will countervail all outward misery; then on the contrary, this is the worst Affliction, when their Teachers are removed, and they deprived of faithful Ministers; this will darken and fowr all their outward Prosperity; this will be Gall and Wormwood, imbittering their Condition, that no outward mercies shall recompence, or make up the loss of. And I will give you some particular places that will convince you of this. When God in his Anger intends to bring a heavy plague upon a people, he threatens them with such a Judgment, *Amos 5. 12, 13.* I know your manifold Transgressions, and your mighty sins : therefore I will send such Judgments

as shall be answerable ; and because you are wicked, and it is in vain to speak to you ; I will let you alone in your sins, and the prudent shall keep silence ; partly through fear, and partly by restraint ; and by my just hand upon you, the prudent that might instruct you to amendment, shall keep silent ; when God is about to bring evil times, he makes the prudent to keep silence, silenceth his Ministers ; so in *Amos* 8. 2. God resolved he would not pass by *Israel*, or spare them any more ; In that day the songs of their Temples should be turned into howlings, their Temple-musick should cease ; they were weary of God's Sabbath, and wish'd, *when will the new-moons be gone that we may sell corn ? when will the sabbath be over, that we may set forth wheat ?* Sabbaths and Sermons come so fast about, we have no time for our Markets ; Ministers Preach so much, so often, 'tis burdensome, and a loss to our worldly concerns ; well, saith God, you shall be troubled with Sabbaths and Sermons little enough, your mind is upon nothing but your outward food, and fear no Famine, but a Famine of Bread. But behold, I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, but of hearing the Word of the Lord :
and

and you shall wander from sea to sea, and from the North to the East, to hear the Word of the Lord, and shall not find it. You fear nothing but a Famine of Bread, and want of Liquor to drink; and if such a Famine come not, if you have Corn and no Sabbaths, you are satisfied; well, I will send a Famine shall be worse than that of Bread, of hearing the Word of God; you shall have Preaching little enough, you shall have Food little enough for your Souls; your Bodies shall be fed, but I will send Leanness into your Souls, ye shall be long enough before you shall have the Word again; ye shall be in a starving condition for want of Knowledge, for want of the bread of Life; you shall be glad to ride and go to seek it, but ye shall not find it. And so when God was angry with Israel, and abhorred them for their Sins, then he sent this Judgment, Psal. 78. 59, 60. God was wroth, and greatly abhorred Israel. What then? So that he forsook the Tabernacle at Shiloh, the Tent which he placed amongst men, and delivered his strength into captivity, and his glory into the enemies hand. He gave his people over to the Sword, and was wroth with his inheritance; and fire, battel, and sword consumed them. God

being angry, forsook *Shiloh*, the place he had chosen for his Residence, and sent the Ark, the token of his Residence, into captivity, and it never returned to *Shiloh* more. And 'tis said, *God forsook Shiloh*. When the Ordinances remove, God removes, and their Priests sell by the Sword. It is one of the fearfulest tokens of God's displeasure, when he removes his Ministers from them, when the good Ministers are taken away with the bad; and as they perished by Fire and Sword, so their Widows made no Lamentation; the publick Calamities were so great, that they forgot their personal Calamities and sufferings. And in *Isa. 5*. God complains of his Church among the *Jews* which he calls *a pleasant Vineyard planted in a fruitful place*, under ordinances; yet for their barrenness, and wickedness of the people, he threatned to take away the Hedge and Protection that he had given them, and to lay them waste, and to break down the Wall, and it shall be depastured, eaten up; and he will suffer Briars and Thorns to grow there; all manner of Sin and Wickedness; and he would not dig and prune them, and command the Clouds not to Rain; take away the means and Ordinances for their saving

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ving good, and so deprive them of all good. And where God withdraws his Ordinances, you see what becomes of that people. *Where the Vision fails, the people perish* Prov. 29. 18. Perish, or is made naked, as the word signifies; where no Prophecy, Teaching, or Preaching is, the people Perish, are made Naked, void of the Righteousness of Christ by Faith, which covers our Nakedness and filthiness; faith being wrought by the Word Preacht.

And God complains, *Hos. 4. 6. My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.* And the Prophet that wrote the 74. *Psal.* 74. *Psal.* which speaks of the Destruction 3, 4, 5, 6, of *Jerusalem*, and their departing into 7, 8, 9. *Babylon*, complains in the name of the people, of the enemies wickedness in the Sanctuary; laying the Temple waste, and setting up their Ensigns for Signs; displaying their Banners upon the ruins of the Temple, as Signs of their victory over that Religion professed there, and over the Worship of God. *There they brake down the carved work with axes, and hammers; took as much delight to destroy it, as formerly their Fathers did to build it, and burnt up all the Synagogues of the land: places built for weekly publick*

Worship; and in the midst of this, they did see none of these Signs; there was no Prophets, neither any amongst them that could tell them how long this should last, and when end. *Jeremiah* was carried into *Egypt*, *Daniel* and *Ezekiel* to *Babylon*, and they had not a Prophet to teach or comfort them, and God had left them; and therefore they desired him to lift up his feet to come and see them in perpetual Desolation; this was a sad case, & time of mourning. Thus you see it sufficiently confirmed by Scripture, *That the want of a publick faithful Ministry to a Nation or particular Congregation, is a very sore Judgment.*

What I shall speak to demonstrate this, I will reduce unto three General heads.

1. *Where a faithful Ministry is wanting, there is a dreadful Eclipse and loss of Gospel light, where it did once shine.*

2. *There is a very sore and soul-killing famine.*

3. *There is a most fearful and heavy curse befallen upon that people and place.*

1. Where a faithful soul-saving Ministry is denied, or removed, there is a dreadful Eclipse, if once a people had it, and a fearful want and loss of Gospel light, where it is removed. Light is the first thing God made, when he Created the

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the World ; and then put it at last, in the fourth day, into the Body of the Sun. He saw the World could not be without light ; what a dark Dungeon would the World have been without light ! The light is the eye and glory of the World ; what were the Heaven it self without Light ? How pleasant is it to behold the Light ? And if the World were such a dark Dungeon Prison, like a Body without a Soul, What is a Nation or Parish without Gospel Light, but as miserable as the Soul without God ? For without saving Knowledge, there is no interest in God ; spiritual darkness covers the Earth, and thick darkness the people, where this Gospel Light did never shine ; and people sit in darkness, and in the very shadow of Death. *But Christ is the Sun of righteousness, that is risen upon the world with healing in his wings, Mal. 4. 2. He it is, that is a light given to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of his people Israel, Luk. 2. 32. He is the day-spring from on high, visiting us through the tender mercies of our God, Luk. 1. 78. And by the Gospel he hath brought life and immortality to light ; and a glorious light shines where the Gospel comes, to guide their feet in the way of Life and Peace ; 1. Tim.*

Mat. 4. 16. *The people that sat in darkness, see a great light.* There is no Light to guide people to the Kingdom of Heaven, but this; and as the Sun is the Glory of the World, so is the Gospel of the Nations and Parishes where it shineth, and the Glory of the Lord is risen upon that people; especially, where this light shines into the dark heart, to give a man the Knowledge of God in Christ, as his reconciled Father. And as the Tabernacle of the Sun is in the Heaven, so is the Church the Tabernacle where this Sun of Righteousness shines, and he walks in the midst of the Golden Candlesticks, to dispence his Light to them; and all Ministers that are the Stars, Christ holds in his right hand, have all their Light from Christ; and, as the Sun, doth warm the World with its heat. And the Northern parts remote from the Sun, how Cold and Frozen, are those Northern parts of the World? So the Lord Jesus shining in the Gospel, where Christ is revealed in the Power of his Love to poor Sinners, how doth this warm the coldest heart, and draw forth the heart warmly, in a lively manner, to mind the concerns of our everlasting Salvation? But the places and climate where this Sun is remote from them,

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them, How dead and benumbed are
 they in matters that concern their Sal-
 vation? What a Spring is there, where
 the Sun comes? How do the Grass, the
 Fruits, and Plants of the Earth bud forth?
 And how do the Birds sing? How is the
 face of the Earth renewed? So, what a
 Spring of Grace appear in the hearts and
 lives of Christians? How do Knowledge,
 Faith, Repentance, Love to God, and
 brotherly kindness bud and blossom, and
 the hearts of the Christians leap for joy,
 at the glad tidings of the Gospel? And
 how are they renewed again, after the
 Image of God? But what a cold, dead,
 fruitless, uncomfortable Winter is there,
 where this Gospel-Light is wanting, and
 this Sun of righteousness shines not?
 what an unwholesome Air do they breathe
 in, where this Sun doth not dispel the
 Mists, Clouds, and Fogs of Sin and Ig-
 norance? And to return to what I be-
 gan with, what Children of darkness,
 and of the night, are they, where this
 Light of the Word shines not? There is
 no Illumination, Conviction, Conversion,
 Regeneration, Edification in Grace:
 They do not steal to Hell, as some in the
 places where the Light is not savingly
 received, do; but they openly go by
 Troops

Troops and Sholes, in the broad way that leadeth to Hell and Death; and are as blind as so many *Owls*, and *Bats*, and like the blind *Sodomites*, do go stumbling and groping, as at midnight, after an unknown happiness, and walk as at uncertainties, not knowing whither they go. What sad Towns and Families are they, where the Light of the Gospel shines not? There is no News or glad Tidings from Heaven that they hear; No revelation of their sin and misery; and of the Redemption of the World by Christ; and when others live in *Goshen*, full of Light; How do those Towns and Families live in *Egyptian* darkness? They are all in blindness, none can help another. O! who would live in such places? Who would not hasten to the places where the Gospel shines? You would think it a sad House, or sad Town to live in, where the Light of the Sun did never shine. Oh! what is it to live there, where there is a total ignorance and absence of Christ, and where neither Governors, nor governed, the Husband, the Wife, the Children, the Servants, nor Neighbourhood know any thing of God savingly; and what a day of Light and Grace do they enjoy, where the Gospel

is

is clearly taught, and Christ the Sun of righteousness, is risen upon them with healings in his wings?

2. Where the powerful Preaching of the Word is denied, or removed, there a sore and a soul-killing Famine doth ensue; a spiritual Famine for want of the Bread of Life. I know men are more afraid of a Famine of Bread, than of hearing the Word of God; but this is far more dreadful and dangerous, threatened by God in *Amos* 8. 13. against the *Israelites* for their sins, as that that should be ~~revelation~~ the Consummation, total sum of all their calamity, to make them completely miserable; he would send them a Famine of hearing the Word of God. And I will briefly shew the misery of a Corporal Famine, that you may the better apprehend the misery of the other. Famine is an extream want of Bread, or necessary Food to maintain Life. Bread, put for all Food, is the stay and staff of mans Life, *Lev.* 26. 26. *Isa.* 3. 1. *Psal.* 105. 16. *When the stay and staff of bread is broken, that ten women shall bake their bread in one oven, and deliver out to the family their bread by weight, and men shall eat and not be satisfied.* Here is a great scarcity; but when the whole stay

Hay and staff of Bread is gone, here is
 a fore-Famine, and then the Life upheld
 by this staff, will quickly fall; and in-
 deed, Famine in such a case, is the cer-
 tain Harbinger of Death: *In famine he*
Job 5. 20. shall redeem thee from death. It is one
 of the fore Judgments of God, if not
 the worst; for Redemption from it, is
 one of the choicest outward mercies.
 We may collect by the Scripture, and
 the effects of it, how sore a Judgment it
 is. It is said of the people of Judah,
 and Jerusalem, that all of all States and
 Degrees, *did sigh and seek their bread,*
and gave their pleasant things for meat,
to relieve their soul, or make their Soul
 come again; the greatest amongst them,
 with heavy hearts, did seek their neces-
 sary Sustainance, and willingly parted
 with their dearest and most pleasant
 things to get food to preserve their lives,
Lam. 1. v. 11. And in *v. 19.* The
 Church complaineth that her Priests and
 Elders, from whom she expected help in
 her distress, were not able to help them-
 selves, but *gave up the Ghost in the City,*
while they sought their meat to relieve
their souls. Their Misery must be great,
 when neither their Civil, nor Ecclesiasti-
 cal Pastors can help themselves. And *Lam.*

2, 12. the young Children cried to *Lam. 4.*
 their Mothers for Corn and Wine, 18, 19.
 necessary Food; and when they could not
 help them, they poured out their Souls
 into their Mothers bosoms, and dyed in
 their Mother laps; yea, their young
 Children did faint in the top of every
 Street; and contrary to the course of na-
 ture, the Women did eat their fruit, and
 Children of a span long. And in *Lam.*
 4 9, 10. *They that be slain with the sword,*
are better than they that be slain with hun-
ger; for these pine away, stricken through
for want of the fruits of the field: The
hands of the pitiful women have sodden
their own Children; they were their meat
in the destruction of the daughter of my
people, Lam. 4. 9, 10. The Women that
 are full of tender Compassion, especial-
 ly to their own Children, contrary to
 the Light of Nature, did put off Bowels
 of Compassion, and fed upon their Chil-
 drens Flesh, to preserve their own Lives.
 Famine eats out Bowels of Compassion,
 and then it eats them that are our own
 Bowels by Relation. Nay higher yet,
 the Prophet *Isaiah* describes a man in
 a fit of Famine, *Isa. 9, 20 Snatching on the*
right hand a mouthful, as it were, and yet
he is hungry, eating on the left, and yet was
unsatisfied,

unsatisfied, when he cannot fill his belly abroad, he comes home to his house, and fastens upon his own flesh, every man eating the flesh of his own arm. I need cite no more Scriptures, to shew the foreness of this Judgment.

1. The spiritual Famine is beyond all this; for the Famine of Bread, is but a bodily Famine; this is a Soul-Famine; of all Evils, Soul-Evils are the worst; Soul-Sickness is the worst Sickness, Soul-Death the worst Death, Soul-Plagues the worst Plagues, Soul-Bondage is the worst Bondage; so Soul-Famine is the worst Famine. Now by how much the Soul is better than the Body, by so much is Soul-Famine the worst Famine; one Soul is worth a million of Bodies; the Soul is the best part in man; that which was immediately created by God, and for God; which did at first participate of the Image of God, and was designed for the Fruition of God here and hereafter, that so glorious, and so excellent a Being should be famished, starved to Death, whilst the body is full-fed, and in good plight, that the Soul is stricken through with hunger, pining away for want of the bread of Life; no Tongue, no Rhetorick can sufficiently express, bewail the sadness and greatness of this

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this Famine. The Prophet *Jeremiah*, in his *Lamentations*, chap. 4. 7, 8. Complains that in the Famine of *Jerusalem*, the *Nazarites* that were purer than the snow, whiter than milk, they were more ruddy in body then rubies, their polishing was of sapphire; Their visage is blacker than a cole, they were not known in the streets: their skin cleaveth to their bones: it is withered, become like a stick. So I may say, the Souls of men that by Creation, were as pure as Angels, as white as innocency could make them, more comely in Complexion than all the Rubies in the World, their polishing above all the art and skill of man; bearing in holiness a lively resemblance of their Maker; and when by the Word of Gods Grace, beholding in the glass of the Gospel, the Image of God, is in part restored; this Purity and Image of God is restored in them that believe. Such as have not this glass to look into, and want the spirit that accompanies it, to renew them, their Image is blacker than a cole, being defiled and besmattered with sin, and are such as know not God, and are not known of him with Approbation; their sin cleaveth fast to their Souls; they are dead,
and

and withered as a stick, fitted as fuel for everlasting burnings.

2. Bodily Famine can but kill the Body; but this Spiritual Famine holds the Sinner under Spiritual Death, and will certainly bring him under the Power of Eternal Death. Bodily Famine can but deprive of a temporal Life; but this will bring a man under the power of eternal Death: Bodily Famine in it self neither excludes a man from Heaven, nor necessarily brings him into Hell. God may love, and save a man, tho starved to Death, for want of Bodily Food: *Lazarus* his wants could not keep him out of Heaven; the everlasting concerns of the Soul do not depend upon the enjoyment or want of Corporal food; where there is this spiritual Famine, if God let a man dye in it, he hath no love for that Soul; Death will have its full power to make him miserable, whom this Famine slays; so great a difference as there is between temporal and eternal Death, so great is the difference between the Temporal and Spiritual Famine; the one ends with this life, the other hath its Influence upon the Soul to eternity.

3. Men are sensible of Bodily Famine, but to a wonder and amazement, they
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are insensible under the spiritual Famine of the Word of God : let men want bodily Food, they are quickly sensible of their want ; for men are, as the Scripture expresseth it, *burnt with hunger*, *Deut.*

32. 24. Famine kindles a fire in the Bowels ; when the natural heat in the Stomack hath no meat to feed upon, it feeds upon Nature, and thence ariseth pain, and men do faint and pine, and languish under the want of bodily Food. Hence they

sigh, *they seek after bread* ; yea, will give their most dear and pleasant things for meat to relieve them, as the *Egyptians* that went to *Joseph* for Corn, sold their Cattel, their Land, and themselves for Bread ; and if men cannot have it, they will make such moans, and doleful groans, as would break a mans heart to hear them ; hunger is sharp, and will break through stone Walls, men will run through any difficulties to get relief, and will feed upon Carrion, and the coarsest diet to preserve Life ; as the

Prodigal Son would live upon *husks* that

that the swine did eat ; yea, they that

are wealthy, *that did feed delicately, or upon delicacies*, that fared deliciously every day, were softly and sumptuously clad, cloathed in Scarlet, have been desolate

Lam. 11

Luk. 15.

16.

Lam. 4. 5.

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in the Streets, and imbraced the dunghills, to find somewhat to feed upon; were glad of any thing to eat, were it never so sorry. *Lev. 4. 5.* But men are insensible of the Spiritual Famine; they see no need of a Ministry, need no Sermons, need no Sabbaths, see no need of Knowledge, or Teaching; and are apt to think it is better where there is less Preaching, and can spare the Gospel-Ministry well enough. Indeed there are some, whom God hath inlightned by the Word, and whose Souls have found the Efficacy of Divine Grace, the sweetness of Gods Ordinances; they cannot but mourn, when God hath by Death, or any afflicting Providence, deprived them of a powerful Ministry, and look upon it as a sad Affliction, depriving them of the most lively Representation of Heaven upon Earth, and of that holy Communion they had with God, and one another, as the Pious Jews, and remnant of the Godly in *Babylon*, mourned for the solemn Assemblies they were wont to have in *Jerusalem*; to whom the *Babylonians* would by way of reproach, cast it in their teeth, saying, Where is your God? And what are become of your solemn Assemblies you talked of? Come sing us one

one of your Hebrew songs; and to them the reproach of this, was a burden; and therefore God promised to gather them, and restore them. So some Pious Christians that have been effectually called by the Word, they are afflicted, cast down, and look upon it as the saddest Providence that can befall them, to be deprived of a Gospel Ministry: But the most Persons, as they felt not the Power of the Word, see not the need of it, and can be content to part with it, and at the best, like *Orpah* and *Naomi*, fairly kiss at parting, and content themselves without it. Zeph. 3.
18.

2. And secondly, when men want their natural food, they will ride, run, go, be at any cost, spare no pains to get it; they know if they have not food, they must starve and dye; but 'tis not so with men in reference to their Souls; if they want the Bread of Life, they seek not by all just means to recover what they lost, or gain some other, that may carry on the work of Conversion amongst them; and if they want at home, they will not seek abroad, and go to the places where the word is savingly Preached; and therefore this Spiritual Famine of the word is worse than all Bodily Famine whatsoever.

4. **Spiritual Famine** carries a higher evidence of Gods displeasure, than a Temporal Famine doth; no doubt but both proceed from wrath, but this proceeds from sore displeasure; it was a sad case with *Israel*, when he gave them quails in anger; and it is no less sad, when he denies food in anger; and smites the Earth with a curse: But it's a thousand times worse where he gives or withholds the Word in anger; when he sends the Word as he sent *Isaiah* to the *Jews*, *Go, tell this people, hear ye indeed, but understand not; see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes: lest they see with their eyes and hear with their ears, and understand with their hearts, and convert and be healed*, *Isa. 6. 9, 10.* His Word should no more convert and save, but convince and condemn them; they had provoked God to anger by their sins, and he had withdrawn his Spirit, which they had so long withstood; and therefore threatened the Word should blind them, because they had shut their eyes against the Light; it should render them the more stupid, insensible, hardened; and of all Judgments, Spiritual are the worst; and of all Spiritual Judgments, this is the

the heaviest ; but where God denies it in anger, this is terrible ; and where he totally removes it in anger, it is as sad a Judgment as he can inflict ; God doth, as it were, openly declare his rejecting such a people ; for as when he would not suffer Paul to go from Corinth because he had *Acts 18.* much people in that place : so it's to be feared, God hath none to be saved there where he denieth to send a powerful Ministry ; where there is no Light set up, there is no lost Groats to be found, no lost Sheep to be brought home ; where there is no Shepherd to seek them ; And *where the vision fails, the people perish, and are destroyed for lack of knowledge, Prov. 29. 18. Hosea 4. 6.*

Thirdly, The third General Head is, *That where God denies the Word to be faithfully Preached, or removes it, this brings that people under a heavy Curse.* The Prophet Malachi, Chap. 4. ver. 5, 6. foretells the coming of John the Baptist as Precursor Christi, the fore-runner of Christ, and the end of his Ministry ; *Behold, I will send Elijah the Prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.* That is, his first coming, that was dreadful to the wicked Unbelievers, though the acceptable year of

the Lord to the Elect; And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to the fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse. The Name of *Elijah*, or *Elias*, is given to *John*, not propter identitatem personæ, as the Rabbins of old did, and the Septuagint, that saith, *Ἐλισαῖος ὡς ἦν Ἰσαακ* · *Ἰσαακ* · *Ἰσαακ*; but this is not in the Hebrew Text. And the Jesuits of late, to keep their Pope from being *Antichrist*, interpret it of the Person of *Elias*; but our Saviour himself applies it to *John*; for speaking of *John*, he saith, *Matt. 11. 14. If ye will receive it, this is Elias that was for to come. Elias Redivivus* then is a Fiction; nor was this spoken by a *Metempsychosis*, as if the Soul of *Elias* were to enter into *John's* Body; but propter identitatem spiritus, & virtutis; because of the like Gifts, Calling, and Ministry; but this is *Πάρεργον*, this by the way. The end of *John's* Ministry was, to Convert the People, to Convert the elder and younger, and bring them to a Harmony in the Faith amongst themselves, and with the Patriarchs, their Ancestors, that did expect Salvation by the *Messias* to come, from whom they had so far Degenerated, as that they might

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might justly renounce them, as none of
 their Children *, and to beget Mutual *Isa. 63. 16.*
 Love, bring them to Repentance, to pre-
 pare them for Faith in Christ, lest finding
 them an impenitent, unbelieving people,
 he should smite them with a Curse, with
 utter Destruction, or devoting them to
 Ruine; the Word is *אָנָּה* from *Charam*
anathematizavit anathemati devovit. This
 is the same with the *Greeks*, *Ἀνάθεμα*,
 and it is the Curse the *Jews* used upon
 him whom they cast out of the *Syna-*
gogue, if he amended not, a giving over
 to *Satan*; at this they lighted Candles, and
 put them out again; to note, that such
 a one was deprived of the Light of Hea-
 ven. But to return to what I aimed at
 in Citing this Place; God sent *John*
Baptist to Preach and Convert the *Israel-*
ites, to prevent his smiting them with
 a Curse. Whence it undeniably follows,
 That where God withholds, or removes
 a powerful Ministry, he smites that Peo-
 ple with a Curse; that being the means
 that God hath appointed to prevent it;
 God finds them under a Curse, and re-
 fuseth to remove it: God commends his
 love to *Israel*, that when they were pol-
 luted in their blood, and no eye pitied
 them, that that was a time of love;

1 Cor. 5. 5.

1 Tim. 1. 20.

and he said to them *when they were in their blood, live*, Ezek. 16. 6. And on the contrary, when God seeth a people polluted in their blood, in a perishing condition for want of the Knowledge of Christ, and Salvation by him, and hath no love for them, but lets them dye in their sins, he doth as it were cast them up under a Curse; this preterition is a fearful Rejection: to this end we may apply that of the Apostle to the Men of *Athens* *, that all the time before Christs coming, men lived in ignorance, and God winked at them; not by way of Connivence, as many Interpreters Expound it; but in a way of judgment; that *interdixit* winking at, or overlooking, may be the same with *quidam*. * Heb. 8. God's not regarding the Jews, when they brake his Covenant; and he regarded them not, cast them off; so our *English Annotations*, *Grotius*, *Calvin*, *Beza*, *Pistator*, and others. God passed them by in anger, and took no care of them, suffered them to perish: And as *Galatians* observes, it is a Metaphor taken from those persons who neglect and despise a thing, will not so much as vouchsafe to look on it; but now in the Gospel, God offers Mercy to such as then he passed by;

by; such then as God still passeth by, not visiting them with Gospel-Light, are in a Cursed State, as men whom God despiseth, and rejecteth, not caring though they perish. And this the Apostle telleth the *Ephesians* in their *Gentile* Estate, *That they were at that time without Christ, and were aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and were strangers from the covenant of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world.* (Such to whom God utterly denyeth the Gospel, are in the same condition) without Christ, which is the head of all misery; and such as have no Communion with the Church; whereas fellowship with the Saints, is a Heaven upon Earth. *And were strangers from the Covenant of Promise; that is, of the Law or Gospel; without the Doctrine and grace of the Covenant, without all means of Salvation, and so without hope, or without God in the world,* Eph. 2. 12.

2^d. And as they to whom the Gospel is totally denyed, so they from whom it is removed, are miserable, and in a wretched state; especially, if it be totally and finally removed, as it is with those *Seven Churches of Asia*, mentioned in the *Revelation*: whose *Candlesticks* are removed.

removed. And according to the measure and degree of a peoples deprivation of Gospel-Light, so is their Misery, when God removes his Ministers, whether by Death, removal to other places, by suspension, or any other Providence; God breaks up House-keeping amongst that people. Now as it is a sad and hard time with the poor, when many Gentlemen that kept Noble Houses of Entertainment, and were much in Hospitality and good Neighbourhood, remove themselves and Families to other places, it is a pinching, starving time with the poor: I am sure it is so here, when God breaks up House-keeping, and the Stewards of his House are turned off, and out of Office; then it is like to be hard with the Saints. No Spiritual Provision is to be had, none of that Bread of Life that they were wont to feed upon, is given out; now they must shift for themselves as well as they can.

2. When God removes his Ministers, then the Treaty of Peace and Reconciliation between God and the People begins to cease. Ministers are Gods Ambassadors, and Christs Ambassadors.

2 Cor. 5. 20 Now then as Ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you

you be reconciled to God, .2 Cor. 5 20.

There is a quarrel depending between God and men; open acts of Hostility pass between both parties, and it is a deadly War; Unbelievers shall certainly dye for it, and be Arraigned as Traitors and Rebels against Heaven, and shall fearfully be Executed. Man is no match for God, God hath no need to make peace; yet, though we are onely in the offence, out of compassion to us that we perish not, God sends and sues for Peace; his Ministers are come to Treat with us about Reconciliation; the Gospel presents us with the Articles of Peace, God offers to enter into a near Alliance with us, and into an offensive and defensive League; and in the Gospel Preached, ye have the whole method, which God laid in his thoughts for our Reconciliation; and if we will acknowledge our offence, lay down our Weapons of Rebellion, submit to Christ, receive him into our hearts by Faith, lead a holy life, in obedience to God for the time to come, an act of Indempnity shall pass, and we shall be received to mercy, and restored to favour, as if we had not offended; and this is the Errand his Ministers, or Ambassadors come about; and whiles the Ministry continues,

continues, the Treaty goes on ; but as it is in the choice of Kings how long their Ambassadors shall lye Leiger in a Forraign Country, (they have much business to do) and so long as the Treaty goes on, and people will condescend to their Artificies, and there is hopes of an Honourable Peace, they shall continue ; but if they will not comply with their Ministers of State, they are called Home, and the Treaty broken ; and then let them look for nothing but War, Fire, and Bloodshed, and what enraged Princes are able to do : so God's Ministers are his Ambassadors Treating about Peace and Reconciliation ; 'tis at God's choice, to continue or remove them ; so long as you shew any willingness to accept of Peace upon Gospel-terms, the Treaty continues ; but if you be Refractory, then God calls home his Ambassadors, and the Treaty is broken : now look for nothing but Wrath, and Vengeance from a provoked, and Sin-revenging God. Now what a sad time is it like to be with a people, with whom God will Treat no more about Peace. Well then, as long as there are Souls to save, Men and Women willing to be Reconciled, brought into God, or built up in grace, his Ministers

nisters shall continue ; but it is doleful when he calls home his Ambassadors ; 'tis a sign he hath no more Souls to save, nor will treat any longer with a people so adverse to Peace ; but if the generality slight not the message , but some few offer indignity to his Servants , God may send others that may finish the work begun , tho for a time it be interrupted. But because all Gods departure is sad ; especially, when it a total removal of it ; I will shew the mischief of that.

1. When the Gospel goes from a place, God himself, in respect of his gracious presence, goes from a people ; and indeed this is the saddest News of all, and the very inlet to all misery. Gods general presence cannot be lost, his gracious presence may ; God hath promised *Mat. 28.* to be with his Ministers to the end of ^{20.} the World ; and where they stay, God takes up his residence with them ; Christ *Rev. 2. 1.* doth walk in the midst of the golden Candlesticks ; and so long as the Ark continued at *Shiloh*, God continued ; but it never returned to *Shiloh* more, after it was taken by the *Philistines* ; and God is said to forsake his Tabernacle at *Shiloh*. So long as *Psal. 78.* the Ark, that was the sign of God presence, ^{60.} stayed,

stayed, God stayed at *Shiloh*; when the Ark was gone, God went too. So whilst the Gospel remains with a Land or People, God remains; but when that removes, God removes with it; and if God remove from a people, wo to that people. Thus, *Hos. 9. 12. tho they bring up children, I will bereave them, that there shall not be a man left; yea, wo to them when I shall depart from them.*

2. When the Gospel goes from a Kingdom or Town, all Soul happiness and blessedness goes away with it; there is such a thing as Soul prosperity, as *St. John* in his Epistle to *Gainus* writes, *I wish above all things, that thou mayest prosper as thy Soul prospers*, Epist. 3 Joh. 2. He had much Knowledge, Faith, Piety, Charity, Sincerity, Peace of Conscience, and Communion with God; and this is far above all worldly prosperity; and where the Gospel is in power, there the saving fruits of the Gospel are, acquaintance with God, interest in Christ, and a rich Gospel-feast, that makes Christians thrive in Grace; now where the Gospel departs, the feast is ended, the Voider comes, and carries all away, and no such Soul-satting, and thriving

thriving opportunities to be enjoyed any more.

3. When the Gospel goes from a place, Kingdom or Town, the honour, splendor, glory, beauty of a Nation goes along with it; the glory of a Nation, or a Town, is the Gospel, where it is powerfully and sincerely taught; Princes Crowns beset with Diamonds and all precious Jewels, are not such a Glory to a Prince as the Gospel faithfully Preacht, is to a Town or Nation: It was Christs birth ennobled *Bethlehem*; tho one of the least Cities, yet it was one that was more highly Honoured above the rest, because Christ was born there; Christ is oftentimes new born in the hearts of them that hear the joyful sound of the Gospel; and those places are truly *Bethlehems*, the houses of bread. *Phinehas* his Wife, when the Ark was taken, called her Childs name *Ichabod*, for the Glory of the Lord was departed from *Israel*; that *Hophni* and *Phinehas* bore the Ark, that were so bad, it caused the Ark to have such Porters as it never had before, uncircumcised *Philistines*, that carried it in triumph into the house of their Iddol god; where the Gospel is dishonoured by the evil lives of Professors, we may fear a trans-

transportation of it to our perpetual infamy, and reproach; it's the Gospel lifts up the glory of a Nation; and an Idol in the Arks room will be the shameful recompence of the loss of it.

4. When the Gospel goes, all peace, plenty, prosperity, trading, will go along with it; it never comes but with a full blessing, and never departs, but it leaves a full curse behind it. *Psal. 74 9.* When all the Prophets were gone, Religion went to wrack, and the State to ruin; then we read of nothing but perpetual desolations in Church and State, the Enemies roar in the Congregations, set fire to it, burnt up all the Synagogues and Religious Assemblies, and nothing less than a total destruction would serve the Enemies; Gods anger smoaks against such a People; and they kindled a fire in Churches and State, that laid both desolate, so that they saw not their signs, nor is there any more a Prophet to tell them when this would end, *2 Chron. 15. 3.* *Now for a long season Israel had been without the true God, and without a teaching Priest; they had put away the true Levites, worshipped Idols, then was there War in the Gates, there was no peace*

to

to him that went out, nor to him that went in, but great vexations were upon all the Inhabitants of the Countries, and Nation was destroyed of Nation, and City of City; for God did vex them with all adversity, a universal scourge and all manner of troubles were they disquieted with.

5. All Peace and Civil Liberty will be lost when the Gospel is lost. The Gospel is the true *Palladium* of the Nation; whilst this stays, all will continue; when this is gone, even our Lives and Civil Liberties will not be long after enjoyed. When the Jews rejected the Gospel, they quickly ceased to be a Nation; the Romans took away the Nation, and they became bondslaves to the Romans. *Psalm* 78. 60, 61, 62, 63, 64. When the Ark was gone, the sign of Gods Presence; then the *Israelites strength was delivered into captivity, and his glory into the enemies hand*; Then he gave his people over to the sword: and was wroth with his inheritance. The fire consumed their young men; their maidens were not given in marriage. The priests fell by the sword, and their widows made no lamentation. Here is Peace, and Liberty, and Life lost when the Ark was lost; and the Gospel

is that to us, the Ark was to them, as sure
a Pledg of Gods Presence.

Q. 3. I come now to the third Question, For
what sins God doth inflict this judgment of
removing the Gospel from a place.

Ans. Answer first in the general, Who
ever be the Instruments, without all
doubt sin is the meritorious cause of it.
God is the efficient cause of the removal
of it; God takes away the Judge, and
the Prophet, and the whole Ray and
Staff of the Evangelical Bread, Isa. 3. 2.
He took *Jehoiachin* from *Israel*, and sent him
to *Babylon*, Jer. 3. 1. But God doth
it not, but because he is provoked; 1)
God be the inflicting cause, sin is the
deserving cause. It is sin that stops the
Ministers mouths, that deprives them of
Liberty, that silences them, that brings
them to the Grave. It is peoples Ignorance,
Enmity, Pride, Drunkenness, Sabbath
breaking, Hypocrisy, Formality, Un-
fruitfulness, Unfavourableness, in their walk-
ing, that removes them; people will give
a Minister the hearing, and commend the
Sermon; but they shut their hearts as
much against the Doctrine, as they do
their Purse against a liberal maintenance;
and their coming to Church, is to cloak
their unrighteousness; their hearing ends
in

in hearing, and for the most part men
leave the Sermon where they heard
it; there is no amendment and reforma-
tion in their hearts and families; and if
any thing will hang a padlock on their
Mouths, or serve them with a Writ of Ease,
this will do it; 'tis this that takes away
Gods *Sanctus*; 'tis this that sometimes
Silence and Imprison them; and if all
men should let Gods Ministers alone, we
have cause to fear that for Christians
Pride, Vanitie in apparel, conformity to
the manners and fashions of the world,
their uncharitableness to one another,
and unanswerable walking to the Christian
Religion, God himself will stop our
Mouths ere long; Being we bring forth
nothing but wild grapes; God will pluck
up the hedge of the Vineyard, and say
it wast; and command the Clouds no
more to rain upon it. If preaching were
accompanied with holy living in the
hearers; if the Gospel were obeyed, if
men did expresse the work of it in their
hearts, and effects of it in their lives; and
they live in the Exercise of Love, Faith,
and Obedience, we might Preach long
enough; Christ would not remove his
Gospel from us, nor repent he sent it to
us. But this is the disease of this age;

that notional truths abound, but practical godliness is antiquated; as *Seneca* observed of the Philosophers; *Boni esse desiderant, similis docti evaserunt*, the more learning they had, the less goodness they had. Let not the waters of the Sanctuary put out the fire of the Sanctuary; and Christ *that hath the key of David, that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth*, would keep the dores of the Sanctuary from being shut long enough, for he holdeth the

Rev. 3. 7.

Rev. 2. 1.

2ly. I Answer more particularly, God sends away the Ministry from a place, 1. When many are prejudiced against the Minister and Messenger that Preach the Gospel. So that they will not receive his Testimony. Thus the Lord Jesus took away *Paul* from Jerusalem, *Make haste get thee quickly out of Jerusalem, for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me*. They were prejudiced against the Doctrine of Christ, and against the person of *Paul*, that he had taught the Jews among the Gentiles to forsake *Moses*, and that they ought not to circumcise their Children, and live after the customs; and that he had profaned the Temple by bringing in

Acts 22.
18.

Gentiles

Gentiles, and had equaliz'd them with the Jews; therefore they would not receive his Testimony; and those that were savable were wrought upon, the other were hardned, and their Destruction was at hand; and therefore God would not have him live idly, or fruitlessly; and therefore sent him to another place; which may teach Ministers rejected by the ungodly, not to be discouraged; God will provide them other work, where their Testimony shall be received.

Secondly, When people will not walk in the Light of the Gospel, whilst they have it; Christ will remove it, as our Saviour told the Jews, *John 12. 35. Yet a little while the light is with you, walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you.* His Doctrine and Miracles had proved him to be the Light of the World; they had by his Doctrine and Ministry the means of Grace, sufficient Light to carry them to Heaven; and he Exhorts them to walk in this Light; they were to have the Light of his Personal Ministry but a little while; and his Gospel holding him out, was shortly to be removed also; and upon removal of this Light, Darkness, and Misery, and Ignorance

norance, would follow; and they should wander like men in the dark; but if they did Believe, and walk in the Light, they should be children of the Light, and Heirs of the Kingdom of Heaven. God lets the Light of the Gospel where it comes, stay a while; if people will walk in the Light of it, it shall continue, and they shall be saved; but if they will not, the Light shall be gone, and they shall be in Darkness, and perish through Ignorance. Light is a precious thing, especially Gospel-Light; and God is not willing to let it shine in vain; therefore, where the Light of the Gospel is not well improved, God may remove it, and set it up where it may be of better use.

ly. When people wax weary of Ordinances, and think them burdensome, when the return of them is more frequent; this was the cause of that Famine of hearing the Word of God that is threatened in *Amos* 8. 11, 12. in the 5. ver. They said, *When will the new moon be gone, that we may sell corn?* For the new Moons were Festival days, wherein they might not buy, nor sell: and *when will the sabbath be gone, that we may set forth wheat?* As if they had said, Festivals and Sabbaths they come so fast, and take

up

up so much of our time, we have not time for our Markets; here is such a ti- with Sabbaths, and Sacrifices, and days of Solemnity, that all our time is taken up that way, that we have no time for our Family occasions, to buy, or sell, and provide things necessary for our daily use. Well, saith God, Seeing my Sabbath and Service is so burdensome, you shall be troubled hereafter little enough with such Services, and Opportunities; *Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will send a famine upon the land, not a famine of bread, and thirst for water, but of the hearing the word of God.* You fear no Famine, but a corporal Famine, of Bread, and Water; but I will send you a worse Famine, of hearing the word of God. *And you shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north to the east: they shall run to and fro, & seek the word of the Lord, and shall not find it.* So in the times of the Gospel, the weekly Sabbaths, and Lecture-days to hear Sermons, and Sacraments; days of Prayer come about so often, we have not time for our Market Affairs, and Family Concerns; we think less Preaching and Praying might do, well enough; Now may God justly say, Well, are my Ministers,

my Ordinances, my Sa^baths, my Word, burdensome to you? well, you shall be troubled less with them; the time shall come, you shall have Preaching little enough, you shall be glad to see a Ministers face if you could, you shall be glad to hear a Sermon before you have it; you shall have Preaching little enough; I will send a Famine, that a Gospel Preacher shall be more precious than the Gold of *Ophir*; you shall be willing to give more pounds, than now you will give pence, to have a Sermon that may come to the Conscience, Preach'd; and if you can steal an opportunity to have a Sermon, or read a Leaf in the Bible, you shall account it a great happiness; the want of the Gospel shall make you prize that *Manna*, which now you loath; you shall starve to death for want of the Bread of Life. Well then, weariness of Ordinances, and undervaluing the Gospel, may procure a Gospel Famine.

4. When the Gospel-offers of Divine Grace are neglected, and slighted, the grace of God received in vain, and Christ with his saving Blessings are not readily receiv'd, The Gospel loves to stay there where it is welcome; it will never go away, if it might have Entertainment;

if

if men did honour, and glorify it, embrace it with the most indearing Affections ; this would preserve it among us for ever. The Church of *Philadelphia*, that used the Word best, had it longest. Our Saviour sending his Apostles to Preach the Gospel, bids them say, *The kingdom of heaven is at hand*. Which consists in Righteousness, Peace, and Joy in the Holy Ghost ; which by the Gospel preached is offered to every Soul, that in the sense of their need shall embrace Christ, *Matt. 10. 7.* and at the 11 verse, he giveth directions where to stay ; and saith, *Into whatsoever city or town ye shall enter, enquire in it, who is worthy, and there abide*. Such as are lovers of Religion, and readily entertain them, and the Gospel, there he commands them to stay ; and when they come to a House, or People to salute them, and offer peace by the Gospel to them ; and if the House be worthy, and accept it, let your peace come unto them ; but if they receive not the offer of peace, they are commanded to leave them, and thereby they shall be debarr'd from any fellowship with Christ and his Ministers, and any benefit of his Gospel. A Guest will stay when he is amongst friends ; so will Christ and his Gospel.

Gospel. But Christs Ministers must pack away, where they find an unwillingness to receive them. As it is in an open Market, where all Provisions are sold, if the people undervalue the Provision, and will not give the Market price, the Market-folks take up their Commodities, and will go home; and say, People will give nothing to the worth of that Corn and Provision they bring, and so will carry them to another place. As Merchants that bring their Commodities to a place, if they will not buy them at a valuable rate, they hast away to another Port. So Gods Ministers, when they see the Gospel Truths are a stale Commodity, and the dead of the Market is come, and people will bid little or nothing for Christ, and reject him and his offers, then away they go, and are sent to another place. So Paul and Barnabas went from the Jews that were at Antioch, and said, Men and brethren, it was necessary the word of God should first have been spoken unto you: but seeing you put it from you, and judge your selves unworthy of everlasting life, we turn to the Gentiles, Act. 13. 46. So when the Gospel is rejected, and the offers of it slighted, and men put away Salvation from

from themselves, then God packs away his Ministers to another place.

5. When the Gospel is not only not received, but opposed, and men speak against it, contradicting and blaspheming, rejecting the Doctrine, and reproaching the Messengers, as in the forenamed place, no wonder if God send away his Ministers, and confirm their own act, judging them unworthy of Eternal life.

So when men are so far from repenting at the word, and gladly receiving the glad tidings of Salvation, that they oppose, revile, traduce, and misuse the Ministers, as the Jews abused Gods Prophets, 2 Chron. 36. 16. *The Lord God of their fathers sent to them by his messengers, rising up betimes, and sending them, because he had compassion on his people, and on his dwelling place; but they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and refused his prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against them, and there was no remedy.* Then their Temple was burnt, and they sent into Captivity: And so the Apostle Paul Preached to the Jews at Corinth in their Synagogues, and testified that Jesus was Christ; and when they opposed themselves and blasphemed, he shook

shook his Raiment, and said unto them, Your Blood be upon your own heads, I am clean: From henceforth I will turn to the *Gentiles*: When People falsely accuse a Minister, and lay their Heads together to heave out the Minister, God may leave them to do it, that they may bring sin and condemnation to themselves. But tho particular Congregations may thus be deprived for their particular spight, God doth not from a Nation or body of a People remove the Ministry, till the body of a Nation thrust it from themselves.

6 The general barrenness and unfruitfulness of a Nation, or particular Town under the Preaching of the Gospel, is a presage of the removal of it, and the ruine of that place; to this end Christ spake a Parable that had relation to the *Jewish Church* and State; but it carries a general truth and warning to all People; for when some had told Christ of the *Galileans*, whose blood *Pilate* had mingled with their Sacrifices, and the People conceived them greater sinners than all others, because they suffered such things, overlooking their own faults; Christ confutes this error, and exhorts every man to repent, or else they shall all likewise

wife perish; not with the same kind of Judgment, but with Eternal destruction. And then brings in a Parable of the barren Fig-tree, with particular relation to the Jewish Church and State; but a general intendment that God would not bear with the barrenness under the means of Grace. *There was a certain man that had a fig-tree planted in a vineyard, and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none; then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, behold these three years I came seeking fruit on this fig-tree, and find none; cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground?* This Fig-tree represented the Jews, and all that should be alike barren under the means of Grace; this Fig-tree was not planted in the vast wilderness, where barrenness might better be born with, but it stood in the vineyard, had a vinedresser to look to it, and Christ came three years, that is, many years seeking the Fruit of repentance, and faith, in the Jewish Church; and particular, the last three years of Christs preaching, and he came and sought for Fruit answerable to the means; and then gives the Sentence against it, *cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground?* It drew away the moisture of the ground from

from other Trees, shaded them from the light of the Sun, and hindered them, and standing it self to no purpose, and being cut down, a better Tree might be planted in the room thereof. Whence learn, barrenness under Gospel-means after sufficient time for growth, God will by no means bear with, but he will either cut them down by removing the means of Grace, or by a spiritual curse, that the word shall never do them good that are guilty of it.

7. A seventh sin hath relation to the People of God themselves that make a more than ordinary profession; and that is, if they decay in religion, in love to God, and his worship and service, in their love to the saints, suffer a decay in grace, and sincere walking with God, and become formal in their profession, lukewarm, and more cold, and remiss in Religion, if they repent not, and mend this fault, and do not their first works, he will unchurch them, remove both Candle and Candlestick: thus God told the church of *Ephesus*, *Rev. 2. 4. I have somewhat against thee; because thou hast lost thy first love.* That love they bare to God, his religion, and their brethren, at that time when they were first called unto the profession

session of the Gospel, they were decayed
 in their love eminently; they had not
 quite lost their love to God, and Religion,
 but it was nothing to what it was; and
 therefore he warns them to remember
 whence they are fallen, and to do their
 first works, or else he would come to them
 quickly, in the way of his judgements,
 and would remove their Candlestick,
 take away the light of the Gospel from
 them, except they did repent and amend.
 And let all Congregations consider it,
 where the word hath been lively and
 powerfully preached, and with much
 affection they have imbraced the Gospel,
 shewed fervent love to Christ, and his
 Gospel, and all that profess his name were
 ready to pull out their eyes for their Mi-
 nisters, as the *Galatians* were for *Paul*, and
 received them as an Angel of God, and as
 Christ Jesus, and now can have their hearts
 in a great measure abated, and alienated
 from God, and his Ministers; let such
 know, they are not so earnest for heaven,
 so tender in conscience, so zealous of
 good works, so lively in prayer, so fre-
 quent in good duties; and they have been
 told of it, and amend not; let such
 know, if they repent not, and do their
 first works, Christ will withdraw the
 Ministry

Ministry of the word from them; the determining sin that brought the flood upon the old World, was the sins of Gods people; and the determining sin that will deprive us of the Gospel, and make our Sun set, and go down at noon, will, I fear, be the sins of Gods people, decaying in holiness, and in their fervent Love to Christs people, and his Gospel; as for others, God expects little better from them, than what he finds; but he looks for an humble, holy, heavenly Conversation in them that he hath chosen to be heirs of Salvation.

Having now shewn you the sins for which God usually inflicts this Judgment, as the meritorious cause, I will a little mention some Reasons, which may incline God to execute this sore Judgment, as he is the efficient cause. And God doth it upon a threefold account, in reference to the wicked, to the godly themselves, in reference to the Gospel itself.

I. In reference to the wicked; God removes the Gospel, because he knows it is but lost labour to them, and cost cast away. A wise Physitian will administer no further Physick to such Patients, whose Diseases are desperate and incurable.

God

God left *Judah*, because their Disease was incurable, *Jer. 30. 12.* God is a wise Physician; he knows whom he hath to deal with: When he seeth his Prescripts are not followed, his wholsom Potions are vomited up, his Cordials heighten the Disease, the Patients are wilful and refractory; he gives them up for gone, they are dead men; there is nothing but a Coffin and a Winding-sheet to be lookt for; he will be their Physician no longer. *Why should ye be stricken any more? Isa. 1. 5.* said God to *Israel*; *ye will revolt more and more.* So, why should a people be instructed any more? They will sin more and more; why should Christ be Preached, and Grace offered any more? they will despise the Grace of God, and reject the Counsel of God more and more against themselves.

2. God had rather men should go on in their wickedness without his word, than with it; unless it be in some few cases, when he is minded, to the greater Conviction and Confusion of the Sinner, to suffer him to go to Hell with a Candle in his hand; that the Sinner should go with the more full sail, and greater lading to Damnation; except in this case, God had rather men
I should

should sin without the Gospel, than with it. As a Husbandman, if the Ground be stark barren, he had rather throw the Plough in the hedge, and not Plough the Ground, or sow his Seed, than to have it Barren after all his Labour and Cost; if people will be wicked, and march under the Devils colours, let them do it in the Devils Territories, and not in Christs Camp, where his Banner is displayed; for people to be wicked under Gospel-Light, is contrary to the design of God in sending it. When the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand, he calls men to repentance, and 'tis the greatest motive in the World; and therefore, if they will sin in the face of the Gospel, this provokes him a thousand times more; Drunkennes, and Whoredom, and Pride, are more tolerable in *Sodom*, than in *Sion*.

2ly. He doth it in reference to the godly, as a fatherly chastisement for their wantonness under Gospel-fulness, for their unthankfulness and unfruitfulness; God knows how to do his people good, in the want of Ordinances, as well as in the use of them: abstinence from food is sometimes necessary in order to a state of health. God is not
tyed

tyed to means, tho we be; he could provide miraculous means for *Elijahs* sustenance; when other means failed; and he could provide *Manna* in the Wilderness for *Israel*; he could be a little Sanctuary to his people in *Babylon*; and under a Gospel Eclipse he can give in that Light from the Sun of Righteousness it self, that he did dispence by the brightest Stars that did shine in the Churches Firmament.

3ly. God doth it in reference to the Gospel it self, for which God himself hath a high esteem, as the Ensign of his Sons Kingdom, and the ordinary means appointed by himself, for Application of his Sons Redemption. God hath always had a high esteem for his own Institutions, and is not willing to have them trampled upon, and lie under contempt; and he will raise the price of them, by the want of them; thus we read in *Samuels* days, when the Lord had deprived *Israel* of his Prophets for a matter of Fourscore years together, and then *Samuel* was raised up; and then it's said, *the word of God was precious in those days, because there was no open vision*, 1 Sam. 3. 1. And as we know the worth of Health by Sicknes, the worth

of Peace by War; so we know the worth of Ordinances by the want of them, tho such Knowledge is dearly bought, which we get *potius carento, quam fruendo*, by wanting a Mercy, rather than by the injoyment of it; for it is a Vexation, not a Consolation, to know good things rather by their Absence than their Fruition; and God to recover the esteem of the Gospel, is constrained many times to cut his people short in the injoyment of it. It was a complaint of *Luther's*, that a man lives forty years before he knows he is a Fool; and by that time he seeth his folly, his Life is ended; so a man lives a long time under the Gospel before he knows the worth of it; and by that time he knows the worth of it, it is removed, *Hinc illa lachryma*. The Lord wipe off those tears, by the return of Gospel Light; and the contempt of the Gospel, by a sanctified use of the want of it. The Lord help us all, to lay lay our selves low before his all-seeing Majesty, for our Provocations we have given him to remove our Candlestick: That Ephesus may be Englands Looking-Glass, that we may do our first works, repent and amend; that we may not be so unhappy, as to live &c
see

see the Funerals of the Gospel, and deprive Posterity of so great a Blessing as the Light of the Gospel is. The Lord grant, that all that love the Lord Jesus, and his Gospel in sincerity, may study to preserve the Unity of the Spirit in the bond of Peace, and in righteousness of Life, that we may mutually embrace one another in love, and turn our Weapons against our common Adversaries the Romanists, rather than into our own Bowels; that we may not with intestine and unseasonable Discords rend the Church of Christ, and expose the Gospel to loss and shame; lest we hear that of the Poet,

*Quumq; superba foret Babylon spolianda
tropheis.*

Bella geri placuit nullos habitare triumphos.

Having fully opened, what a happiness it is for a Nation, or particular Town or Congregation, to enjoy a powerful, godly Ministry.

And 2ly. What a sore Judgment it is for God to take away a powerful, lively Ministry from a Nation, or a particular Congregation; And for what sins God doth usually inflict this Judgment. I will not from hence descend to the particular

particular duties incumbent on the Ministers, to shew, what their duty is, in a conscientious discharge of their Office, and Calling. Nor shall I descend into all the particular duties God requireth at the hands of a people, whom God hath blessed with an able, godly Ministry; this would afford matter for an able Pen, and a larger Discourse, than is intended by me. I shall therefore confine my self to the handling of these Two Cases. 1. What may comfort Believers, that have gained Saving Grace before the removal of it; and their duty. And 2ly. What is the Misery of such a People that have reaped no Saving Benefit by the Ministry before its removal, and what they ought to do under such a loss. And First, of the first of these, which was the Fourth *Query*, to which my advice is, as followeth, 4ly. Then the next Question, or Case of Conscience is, *What may comfort Believers that have gained Saving Grace before the removal of the Gospel from them, and what is their duty under it?*

Answer. Here we have Two things to inquire into;

1. *What may comfort a Believer in this loss?*

And 2ly. *What his duty or behaviour should be under it?*

1. What

2. What may comfort him in this loss. To want a Gospel Ministry, is in it self an uncomfortable estate. This is implied, and it is much more uncomfortable to them, who have felt the power of it in their hearts. When *Samuel* was dead, *Israel* mourns for it: one good Minister removed, or dead, is a Publick loss; and he is no *Israelite* that mourns not under the loss of it. A good Minister is a common Treasure, and his removal a Publick loss; no gracious soul, that enjoyed benefit by that Light, but must needs have a share of Sorrow in the setting of such a *Sun*; that man hath a dry heart, that can part with God's Ministers without Tears. *Elisha* at the rapture and removal of *Elijah* to Heaven, at the parting, Cryed, *My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof: and he saw him no more; and he took hold on his own clothes, and rent them.* He call's him the chariots and horsemen of *Israel*; partly, in reference to his rapture, being carried Triumphantly to Heaven with Chariots and Horses; and also in relation to his former usefulness in his Life; wherein, by his Prayers, teaching, and care to bring them back again to God, and other good works, he

had been a better defence to *Israel*, than Chariots or Horsemen could be; and when he was gone, and could see him no more, he rent his Clothes, in expression of his grief, and sence of the great loss. Yea, *Joash* a wicked Prince, that walked in the ways of *Feroboam*, when *Elisha* the Prophet was sick of his sickness, where of he died, went down to visit him, and wept over his face, and said, *O my father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof*; even a wicked man sensible of what a worthy instrument he had been for publick good; and what a distress the Land was in, wept over his face for the loss of such a worthy Instrument of publick good, and cryed, *my father; my father*, out of Reverence to him; *the chariots of Israel, and the horsemen thereof*; looking on him as the best defence the Kingdom had, and obtained a comfortable Promise of Deliverance. Ministers, when taken away, that have been eminently useful, may by the worst of men be bewailed; much more by the godly, that have received the Light of Life, by their means. And when *Paul* sent for the Elders of the Church of *Ephefus* to *Miletus*, and told them, *They should see him no more*; and gave them counsel,

counsel how to discharge their duty ;
*He kneeled down, and prayed with them,
 and they wept, and fell on his neck, and
 kissed him ; Sorrowing most of all for the
 words which he spake, that they should
 see his face no more, Acts 20. 36, 37, 38.*

'Tis a heart-breaking Object, to take
 the last Farewel of an eminent, useful
 Minister, that hath been useful and ser-
 viceable with success in his Ministerial
 Function ; and therefore I cannot forbid
 your Tears.

For God to remove wise Master-build-
 ers, that laid in their Ministry a sure
 Foundation, laying the Elect upon Christ,
 making them useful, savingly to bring
 many to Christ, and build them up in
 him, in hope of Eternal Life ; to remove
 the Spiritual Planters, by whose Mini-
 stry the ignorant are led into the Know-
 ledge of Christ, grace planted in their
 hearts, they being cut off from the old
 stock of *Adam*, and ingrafted into
 Christ ; to remove laborious, skillful
 Husbandmen from God's Church and
 Tillage, that should make them fruitful
 in Holiness ; to deprive them of Christ's
 Ambassadors, that come to offer Recon-
 ciliation with God, and make peace with
 Heaven ; to lose faithful Watchmen,
 that

that take care of the Flock, as knowing they must give account to God for the Souls lost by their neglect ; to be deprived of Faithful Guides that may go before them in Example and Life, and build up the people by their Doctrine and Life ; to take away faithful Shepherds from the Flock, sound Teachers, and faithful Admonishers, whom God hath made instrumental in the Salvation of others : Certainly, this is a sad Providence, be it in what manner soever the deprivation came ; and I cannot forbid such from being close Mourners ; nay, if it be the removal of one such from a Congregation, who can tell the loss that people sustain ?

1. If a faithful Minister succeed not, there will be much ignorance of God and Christ ; and the precious unsearchable things of Christ will lye hid and unrevealed ; the sinfulness of Sin, the misery of an unconverted State, the necessity and excellency of Christ, and the necessity of faith, repentance, will be in a great measure hid ; the people, unless they have a burning and shining light, may sit in darkness and in the shadow of death ; and if they have no preaching ; the people will perish for want of vision : *If a blind*

Prov. 29.

18.

Mat. 15.

14.

blind guide, both will fall into the ditch.

2. All manner of looseness and profaness usually succeeds in such places where the light did once shine; if a faithful Ministry succeed not; and as when a man seems to be enlightened by the Ministry, and the Devil cast out, *if he return again, he bringeth seven devils with him* Mat. 12. 25. worse than himself, and the latter end of that man is worse than his beginning. And if a man were enlightened, and hath escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of Christ; if a faithful Ministry to help carry on what was fruitfully begun, be wanting, the man may return *with the dog to the vomit*, and be more wicked and profane then ever; and usually no places prove so prodigiously Profane, as where a strict powerful Ministry lived, if an unskillful or unfaithful Minister succeed, or they be left as sheep without a shepherd. 2 Pet. 2. 20.

Nay, thirdly, the Godly themselves will find a great decay of Grace; as a man that hath his food taken from him, you will quickly find a sensible decay in his Countenance, Strength; how weakly will he walk, and how unactive will he be, to what he was before? A Christian will neither be servent in duty, frequent
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in duty, abundant in duty, nor Spiritual in duty, nor lively nor powerful in duty; as when he had a quickning piercing prudent Ministry to oversee him, and excite him; *For the words of the wise are as goads, and as nails fastned by the masters of assemblies, given by one shepherd,* Eccles. 12. 11. They are Goads to quicken to duty, and Nails fastning men in their duties; the hearts of the People are pierced by the word, and the word takes deep root, and so becomes fruitful; and where a Godly Ministry is wanting, there is want of Wisdom to preach suitably to the condition of the hearer; there will be backwardness in the hearers, and they will need a Goad to quicken them; and there will be unsteadfastness, and they will need a Nail to fasten them.

4. Afflictions will soon sink you, and temptations will overcome you, and oppositions will discourage you, if by applying the promises they did not support you, in temptations counsel you, in oppositions incourage you by the Comforts of the Word. *Psa. 119. 92. Unless thy law had been my delights, I had perished in my afflictions. And Psa. 94. In the multitude of my thoughts within me, thy com-*
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forts delight my Soul. The Ministry wisely applying the comforts in afflictions helps against temptation, encourageth against all oppositions.

4. Your outward Mercies will be bitter to you, your life a burden, you will be weary of living. What is an Estate without the Gospel? What is it to be Rich in the World, and poor in Grace? to have enough for this life, no hope, no evidence for a better? and no Ministry to help you in your way to the Kingdom of Heaven? What a weariness to live in a place without God, and without ordinances? will you not cry out, *Wo is me that I dwell in Mesekh, and have my habitation in the tents of Kedar.* The *Muscovites* and *Arabians* were strangers to the visible Church; savage and wild *Barbarians*; and 'tis sad sojourning and living there; and where ungodly men traduce, and a Christian lives without communion with God in his ordinances, it is as if he dwelt in *Mesekh* or *Kedar*; and this will be burdensome to such; and no wonder if in such a case Christians mourn; yet take a little comfort with your sorrow.

1. 'Tis a wonderful mercy, that the saving work of Conversion was wrought upon you before God removed the Gospel

pel from you; this is indeed a sweet Cordial; conversion is the end for which God appointed the Word, for which Ministers preach, and you hear; and conversion is no common work; divide a Congregation into four parts, not one hearer in four are wrought upon to Salvation; we read of the High-way Ground, the Stony Ground, the Thorny Ground, and the Good Ground; there are four sorts of hearers, but scarce one sort hear it savingly; nay in a numerous Congregation, if the seed of the Gospel sown, should take in the heart of one in forty, we should think a comfortable crop, and harvest that would follow; a sound convert is *rara avis*, a black Swan; a miraculous work; *Peter* converted three thousand Persons at one Sermon; but we may Preach three thousand Sermon, and not convert one Soul; the Gospel Ministry hath lost its wonted Efficacy; but if God hath blessed it so to thy heart, as to make thee see thy native vileness and unfitness for Gods Kingdom, made sin a sensible burthen to thee, renewed thy nature, brought thee to sound Repentance, and Faith in Christ, before he removed his Gospel from thee; this may exceedingly comfort thee, that this work is done before the

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the means was removed. What a comfort was it to the manslayer, if he had gotten to the City of Refuge before the Avenger of Blood did overtake him? What comfort was it to Lot, that he was gotten out of Sodom into Zoar, before the showers of Fire and Brimstone came down from Heaven on the Sodomites to consume them? What satisfaction was it to Noah, that before the Flood came, he had an Ark prepared, in which he might be safe, when others were perishing in the Waters? In the like manner it may comfort thee, that God by the Gospel hath converted thee, and put thee into a safe State for Eternity, before the removal of it.

2. If the Gospel Ministry be removed from thee, God hath not taken away himself, he remaineth with thee; for *God hath chosen the man that is godly, and set him a part for himself*, Pla. 4. 3. Every man that is godly, is Gods peculiar Jewel, a chosen vessel, called out of the world to have fellowship with God in this life, and dwell with him for ever in heaven; God doth not only dwell with him, but in him; *herby we know that we dwell in him and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit*, John 4. 13. and thou art near, and dear to God, because of thy Conformity
to

to his Image; and the Scripture pronounceth thee happy, who hast interest and hope in God. *Happy is the man that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the Lord his God,* Psal. 145. 5.

3. If thy Pastor or Minister be removed, yet Christ is with thee, *that is the great Shepherd of the sheep,* Heb. 13. 20. and the Shepherd and Bishop of your Souls, to whom by Conversion you are returned, 1 Pet. 2. 25. He is the only Shepherd to whom immediately the care of the sheep is given, *Ezek. 34. 23.* He is the true Shepherd, to whom the care of all the elect is committed, that hath his calling from God, and doth truly discharge it; the best Pastors, and their Actions, being but men, have many failings, in Skill, Power, and Attendance; but Christ hath none, being God as well as Man; he is indeed *the good shepherd,* *Joh. 10. 11.* Other Shepherds have their Flocks delivered to them; Christ hath no Sheep, but he is fain to seek them in Woods and Desarts, and Solitary places, and in lost places; nay, he is come down from Heaven to seek these lost Sheep, *Luk. 19. 10.* *The Son of man is come to seek and save that which was lost,* and lay down his Life to Ransom and

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and Redeem them, *John 10. 15. I lay down my life for my sheep.* And his sheep are all naked Sheep, and have no fleece but what he gives them; he clothes them all with the Fleece of his own Righteousness, and so is become *The Lord their Righteousness, Jer. 23. 6.* And Christ is made of *God to us righteousness, 1 Cor. 1. 30.* He knows all his Sheep by Name, *John 10. 3.* and he knows all their wants and diseases, and the ways to help and cure them: he knows every thing that is in man, and needs none to tell him what is in man, *John 2. 24, 25.* and he feeds in the Majesty, and Name of the Lord his God, *Micah 5. 4.* He can defend his Sheep from the hungry Lion, and Beasts of Prey; and pities them when they have no subordinate shepherds, *Matt. 9. 36. When he saw the multitude, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad as sheep having no shepherd.* And is the Arch-shepherd, or Prince of Shepherds, that hath the sending of all Ministers, *John 20. 21. As my father sent me, so send I you.* Ministers are sent by him still, and therefore he will provide them; for he saith, He is the door, by which they enter in to his fold, and they shall be saved, and

go in, and out, and find pasture; they shall be secured from Death, and obtain Eternal Salvation; and shall go in and out securely under his Protection, and find rest for their Souls. This may comfort you in the loss of a faithful Minister, That you are under the charge of Christ; He is your Shepherd, and therefore you shall not want, *Psal* 23. 1.

4ly. Though the outward Ministry be removed, where God hath begun a good Work, he is engaged by promise, and by what he hath done, to perfect it. This I gather from that of the Apostle to the *Thessalonians*, 1 *Epist.* Chap. 5, 23, 24. The Apostle had highly commended the *Thessalonians*; and in the 23. *ven.* Prayes God to work in them what he had exhorted them unto, Progress and perseverance in Sanctity. *The God of peace sanctifie you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit, and soul, and body, be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.* And then he adds, *Faithful is he that hath called you, who also will do it*, 1 *Thess* 5. 23, 24. Whence observe, That he that beginneth the Work of Grace, must perfect it, according to the Prayer of *Paul* for the Christian *Hebrews*, 1 *Pet.* 5. 10. Now the God of all grace
who

who hath called us unto his eternal glory,
after ye have suffered a while, make you
perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.

2. Observe here, that he assures them, that
God will do it, and this confirmed by a
double reason. 1. From the property of
God, he is faithful; which implies, a Pro-
mise, he will do it; God hath given a
Promise, That he will keep Believers in
the State of Grace, *Isa.* 59. 21. *Isa.* 54.
10. *Jer.* 32. 40. which you may read;
and he is faithful in fulfilling his Promises
made, and will not suffer his faithfulness
to fail, *Psal.* 89. 33. 2ly. From the Work
begun, and continued, which is a Pledge
of God's purpose to perfect it, and pre-
serve them that he hath called; and there-
fore in *Phil.* 1. 6. He telleth the *Philippi-
ans*, he is confident of this very thing,
That he which hath begun a good work, will
also finish, or perform it, till the day of
Christ.

3ly. It is a very great loss, but recover-
able. When *Peter* was in Prison, there
was fasting, and crying, and praying to
God for him till he was restored, *Act.* 12.
5. Christ took him from them; to him
they seek; and if any peoples Minister be
gone, this is the best way to fetch him
again, or some other in his room. Thus

Paul, when in Prison at Rome, he writes to Philemon, thus, *I trust that through your prayers, I shall be given unto you, Phil. ver. 22.* And the Author to the Hebrews, Chap. 13. ver. 18, 19. *Pray for us; and I beseech you the rather, that I may be restored unto you the sooner.*

6ly. Consider seriously, that your conversion-work being done, the most necessary, the most difficult work you have to do, the most excellent, and most glorious work is already done; you have shot the Gulf, passed through the pangs of the New Birth; you are already passed from Death to Life; and that the day is coming, and it will be but a short time, and your loss will be made up with a more full, clear, perfect, and compleat enjoyment of God, wherein you shall not enjoy, nor need any Ordinances; for God shall be to you all in all; and what you wanted in outward means, shall be made up immediately by himself in heaven; you shall need no Temple, for the Lord God Almighty, and the Lamb, are the Temple of it: comfort yourselves with these Words.

2. Having shewed what may comfort you; I come now to shew you, what your Duty is under this Dispensation.

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There are many Duties that you are to perform in reference to this Providence.

1. Be not so mindful and sorrowful for your loss, as to forget to be thankful you enjoyed it so long, and that God was pleased to make it effectual unto the Salvation of any of you, before he did remove it; do not only look upon the darkside of the Cloud, but look upon the light side of this Providence; mourn not so much, you had a useful Ministry no longer; but that you had it so long, and that God Blessed the Word so far as to make it a powerful instrument in the hand of God, to translate any of you out of the Kingdom of Darkness, into the Kingdom of his dear Son Paul gave thanks to God for the Colossians and himself, that God had made them meet to be partakers of the inheritance with the Saints in light; and that God had delivered them from the power of darkness, and translated them into the Kingdom of his dear Son, Col. 1, 12, 13. Observe first, Man by Nature is unfit, unmeet to partake in the heavenly Inheritance and saving Blessings that come to the World by Christ; flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God, 1 Cor.

15. you and unless a man be born again, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God, Joh. 3. 5. Nay, we are incapable of
 2 Cor. 3. 5. *thinking a good thought of our selves; all our sufficiency is of God; and the natural man receiveth not the things of God.*

2 The general offer of Grace, which is made to all in the Ministry of the Gospel, is not sufficient without the internal insuperable Grace of the Spirit, to make us meet to receive it; the general offer is made to all to whom the Gospel comes, 11

3. But the internal Operation of the Spirit is peculiar to the Elect: *All that the father giveth me, shall come unto me, saith Christ, Joh. 6. 37. The spirit of truth the World cannot receive, Joh. 14. 17. No man can come to me, except the Father, which hath sent me, draw him, Joh. 6. 44. And as many as were ordained to eternal life, believed, Acts 13. 48.*

4. We are by nature under the Power of Darkness, under the Power of Satan, Ignorance, and Misery, Eph. 2. 2. Eph. 5. 8. *Mat. 24. 30.* Now as they that carry Colonies, or a people out of one Country to inhabit another; so God doth by a strong hand snatch us out

of

of Satans Power, and made us pass from under the Kingdom of Darkness, under Satan, Sin, and Misery, our native soil, into the Kingdom of his dear Son; in the State of Grace here, and into the Kingdom of Heaven after this Life. Now what an unspeakable comfort is this, and what thankfulness doth it call for at our hands? St. Paul, speaking of the *Thessalonians*, saith, *What thanks can we render unto God for you, for all the joy wherewith we joy before God for your sakes?* 1 Thes. 3. 9. He did apprehend such a measure of Gods Love, in that benefit of their effectual Conversion by his Ministry, that he could by no means satisfy himself in any measure of thankfulness, for the joy it brought to him; what measure of thankfulness is due to God from Believers, for their own Conversion? If God send the Light of the Gospel, to shew us the way to Life, and warn us to flee from Wrath to come, it is great Mercy, more than thousands in the World enjoy; but this might only leave us without excuse, and tend in the end to our greater Condemnation, for not obeying the Gospel. But for God to make it the powerful Instrument of our Conversion, when others reap no benefit by

It; what thanks do Believers owe to God for this? Especially, in this age where in the Womb of the Gospel hath been in a great measure shut up from bringing forth Children to God by a sound Conversion; in most places the Burials are more than the Births; and therefore the Church is on the losing hand; but it is a marvellous comfort, where the word hath any saving work; if you have found it, give God the thanks and Glory due unto his Name.

2 Kings

2. 12.

1 Samuel

25. 1.

Act. 20. 38.

2. Be humbled under this sad Providence. *Elisha* rent his Clothes when God took *Elijah* into Heaven; all *Israel* lamented *Samuel's* Death; and the Elders of *Ephesus* took heavily *Pauls* departure from them, that they should never see his face more. Lament for your selves, you want the Ministry as much to build you up in Grace, as well as to bring you into the State of Grace. The Apostle gives great Commendation to the *Thessalonians*; they were a famous Church, and many Eminent Christians were there, and the Word of God came with Power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance, and no affliction could quench their love to the Word; they were ensamples to all

1 Thess. 1. in *Macedonia* and *Acbaia*; yet still
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Paul did earnestly Pray night and day, that he might see their face, and perfect their work of Faith; there was something lacking in their Faith still, that the Ministry must supply, 1 *Thef.* 3. 9. He thought his lively voice would have more efficacy than his writing, tho it were full of Divine Doctrine and heavenly Counsel; but his presence and preaching might be more useful; and as preaching is the means to beget Faith; so it is a principal means to increase it, *Rom.* 10. 17. Hence *Paul* writing to the *Hebrews* a large Epistle, yet warns them, to obey them that have the rule over them, and submit to them, as those that did watch for their souls, *Heb.* 13. 17. and in the 22. ver. and to suffer the Word of Exhortation from their Pastors. And writing to *Rome*, he wrote a long Epistle; yet did desire to see them to impart some spiritual gift; the Faith of the best Christians may be defective, for matter and degree: Some points of Faith a man had need further to be instructed in; the Faith of the *Corinthians* was defective in the matter of the Resurrection. *Peter* himself remained doubtful of the Abrogation of the Law, and breaking down the Partition Wall; and in the

Rom. I. II.I *Cor.*
15. 12.*Ab.* 10. 14.

the measure of believing, in our knowledge, assent, adherence, assurance, who finds not need of the Word to strengthen his Faith, and to heighten his other Graces? Therefore mourn for your own loss, in wanting a faithful Guide or Admonisher, whose Ministry might be useful to edifice you, and build you up; tho the Foundation-stone be laid, there is Superstructure-work yet behind? And thou hast Satan, the World, and thy corrupt heart, that will be great hindrances to thy Faith, which will need, and call for assistance from Gods Ministers.

2. There are others that are blind and ignorant, that remain in the Congregation of the dead, that are in the gall of bitterness, in the bond of iniquity, that are strangers to the Life of God through Ignorance, that are like to perish for want of Gospel-Light.

3. And how like a desolate Widow will a Congregation set, till God provide another Pastor that may feed the Congregation with knowledge and understanding? Jer. 3. 15.

4. If you can lament the loss of Trade, and Merchandise; why should you not especially mourn for the loss of your spiritual Merchandising, when every Sabbath

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bath the Ministers came loaden with Evangelical blessings of richer value than all the Treasures of the *Indies*.

3^{ly}. Eye God in this Providence ; do not lay the blame upon this, or that Instrument ; but behold God in it. Is there any *evil in the city, and the Lord hath not done it* ? Amos 3. 6. If there be a *famine of hearing the word of the Lord*, it is *Amos 8. 11.*
 God that sends it ; it is he that takes away the natural stay and staff of Bread, *Isa. 3. 2.* and he takes away the stay and staff of our spiritual Bread. God hath the placing, and displacing of Ministers ; he sent *John Baptist to preach in the wilderness* : he set *Titus to preach in Crete* ; *Matt. 3. 1.*
 he sets *Epaphras to preach at Coloss.* *Titus 1. 5.*
 and *Epaphroditus at Philippi*, and *Coll. 1. 7.*
Timothy at Ephesus ; and the ordinary Pastors of *Ephesus were made overseers* by the Holy Ghost, *Phil. 2. 25.*
1 Tim. 3. *A& 2. 28.* And he holds the stars in his right hand ; and not a Minister displaced without Christ : *Rev. 2. 1.*
 He sent *Paul out of Jerusalem, Go quickly out of the city, for they will not receive thy testimony.* *A& 22. 18.*
 He sent *Jonas from Judea to Nineveh.* And Christ hath the key of *David* ; and if he shut a Congregation, no man can open it ; and it is through the *Rev. 3. 7.*
wrath of the Lord of hosts, when the land

- is darkness, Isa. 9. 19. And Christ threatened Ephesus to remove the candlestick from her, Rev. 2. 5. God told the Israelites, he would command the clouds to rain no more upon his Vineyard. Then if this be so, look not to men, and Instruments, nor badness of times, and lay not the blame here; but look higher, at God, and hearken to the voice of the rod, and who appointed it. As Job looked not to the *Caldeans* and *Sabians*, but unto God, so do you. And here consider how far your own sins had a hand in it; your unthankfulness, unfruitfulness, Sabbath-breaking, want of holy humble walking, your uncharitableness, and your unfurtable walkings to your prefection; especially, your not walking in the Light, when you had it; not improving it to the end for which God sent it; and search and try your way, and see how your own wickedness hath corrected you; and lick the dust, if there may be hope. Blame your selves most for this evil; accuse not the times or instruments; 'tis usual to put the cause away from our selves. Adam charges God with giving him such a Wife, and she charged her sin upon the Devil; and *Ahab* charged *Elijah* for being the trouble
- Isa. 5. 6.
- Micb 6. 9.
- Job 1. 21.
- Lam 3. 40.
- Jer. 2. 19.
- Gen. 3. 12, 13.

bler of *Israel*; every one puts it off from himself, but the most humble Christian will with *Jonah* confess, I am the cause of all this; be perswaded to find out the sins, that ye may Repent, and God return in mercy.

1 King. 18.

17.

Jonah 1-12

4ly. You that have sound the Word blessed to you to your effectual Vocation; as you should acknowledge with all thankfulness, and enlargedness of heart, the riches of God's grace, in bringing you into a state of grace and salvation by the Gospel; So see that you walk suitably to a believing State, and walk worthy of your effectual Vocation; this you are frequently called upon to perform in the Scripture, *Ephes. 4. 1. Walk worthy of your vocation wherewith you are called.* And in *Colloss. 1. 10. Paul* prays for them, *That they might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing.* *Phil. 1. 27. Only let your conversation be such as becometh the Gospel of Christ.* And *Paul* Exhorts the *Thessalonians*, *That they would walk worthy of God, who hath called them to his glory and kingdom.*

The Question will be, *What this worthy walking is?* Now to this I Answer,

First, That this Worthiness is not meant of a worthiness of Merit, Causality,

sality, or Desert; a Worthiness, of condignity, whereby we may merit God, and his endless favours bestowed on us in Christ; this is not possible, and such proud Dreams we leave to the *Roman Church*.

Secondly, Nor by Worthiness, do we understand such an exact proportion of equality in our walking, as shall be commensurate to the Gospel, and rule of Righteousness; this is more desirable than possible; this imperfect State of Sanctification in this Life, is incompatible with such a degree of Holiness.

2ly. But we understand a Worthiness of conveniency, condescency, suitability, that our lives may carry no repugnancy to the State of Regeneration, and an agreement to the will of God; for then a man is said to walk worthy of the Lord, when he so lives as becomes him that is called by the Gospel unto the adoption of the Sons of God, and to a living hope of the Heavenly Inheritance, bringing forth fruits meet for Repentance and amendment of life, and suitable to the grace of the Gospel. Now this suitable walking, according to a Christians Vocation, and a Believing State, is, when a man shall perform these Seven Particulars,

lars, which I may not largely insist on.

1. When he shall obey and fulfil the ends of his Christian Vocation.

2. When he shall do all his service to God from a right Principle.

3. When he shall walk and live by a right Rule.

4. When he shall do all things to a right End.

5. When he doth all things in a right manner.

6. When he keeps up his Christian Course constantly without Hypocrisie or Apostacy.

7. When he can comfort himself in God, and in the hope of Eternal Life under all discouragements in his Christian Vocation.

1. *When a man shall obey all the ends of his Christian Vocation ; which are these,*

1. He is called out of Darknes into Light, and must walk as a Child of Light.

2. He is called out of a State of Prophaneness to Holiness, and therefore must live not a life of Sin, but of Holiness.

3. He is called from vain Worship, to the true Worship and Service of God.

4. He is called out of the World to the

the enjoyment of God, and to a heavenly Life.

5. He is called from a State of Misery, into a State of Blessedness, and must live answerably. In these I will be as brief as I can.

First, Believers are called out of Darkness into Marvellous Light, 1 Pet. 2. 9. This darkness is a soul darkness: 1. The darkness of Ignorance, and Error, in respect of the will of God in general, how they ought to live, and serve God. 2. It is a Spiritual blindness they are under in respect of God, and Christ, whom they know not savingly. 3. It is a Spiritual Darkness, in Opposition to the Light of Faith; the darkness of Unbelief. 4. The utter Darkness of Misery that shall befall them that are not called of this State; now all men unconverted are in this estate by Nature; and by the grace of God in Conversion, the Elect are called into an estate of Light: *Ye were sometimes darkness, but now are light in the Lord, Ephes. 5. 8.* It is a light of knowledge of God, and his Son Jesus Christ; his holy Will revealed in the Word, set up in the Soul by the Spirit, enlightning the Mind by the Light of the Word, and by the Light of Faith; and

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and it is marvellous Light, procured by the Mediator after a long night of Ignorance: a Light, at the command of God shining in our dark hearts, to give us the light of the knowledge of himself in Jesus Christ: now the duty of such is, *to walk as children of the light*. Not only marvellously to be affected at their former Darkness, and present Light. They must no longer live as those that know not God, and Jesus Christ; but lead a life suitable to the day of grace, and the Light God hath set up in them. You must do Three things:

1. You must lay aside your Night-cloathes, put on your Spiritual Garments. Persons, though they be homely in the Night, will have care to put their Apparel fitly on, before they come forth in the Day time. So must Believers walk decently, as become Christians, adorned with Christ's Righteousness, and the graces of the Spirit; and not walk stark naked by Day-Light, as Mad-men out of their wits do.

2. The Light is given to Work by, not to Loyer by: when the Light comes, Men fall to their business; so must Christians make Religion their business, and mind the Work they have to do, to glorify

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fie God, and save their Souls: so must you; you must not be Slothful; and he that is Righteous, must be more Righteous still.

3. Men in the Light of the *Sun*, and day-light, will take a care, that all their Work be fair, and honest; so must Christians see that all they do, be fair, and honest in the sight of God and Man.

2. They are called from Sin to Holiness, from Prophaness and Ungodliness, to lead a holy Life; So saith the Apostle, *God hath not called us unto Unclean-ness, but unto holiness*, 1 Thess. 4.7. Christians are dead to Sin, and how shall they that are dead to Sin, live any longer therein? they cannot Lye, Swear, be Drunk, Proud, and Covetous as they have been, and as others are: They are such as de-

2 Tim 2.19 *part from iniquity, deny ungodliness, and*

Titus 2.12 *worldly lusts; and they are Saints by calling; it is their duty and care, that as*

1 Pet. 1.15. *he that called them is holy, so that they be holy also in all manner of holy life and conversation. Say ye of Sin, as Ephraim of his Idols, Get ye hence, what have I to do with you any more? and follow after holiness, without which no man shall see God.*

3. They are called from vain, false Worship,

Worship, to serve the Living God ; all men by Nature are said to walk *according to the course of the world*, Ephel. 2. 2. And if they seem to be religious, and live in known Sins, that is a vain Religion, *James* 1. 26. But the godly are turned from dumb Idols, to serve the Living God, *1 Theff.* 2. 9. So a true Believer neither worshippeth the true God, in a false manner ; nor gives to any Creatures, or lusts, that Affection that is due to God ; they dare not give Divine Worship inward, or outward, to any but God ; if you be God's, you must make the pure and spiritual Worship of God, the end of your Calling and Life ; you must own him, give up your selves to him, and glorifie him according to the Light and Rule of his Word.

4. You are called out of the World, to the enjoyment of God, to lead a heavenly Life, weaned from the World: *Gal.* 1. 4. Hence, Believers are said to be *redeemed from this evil world* ; those that are Chrſt's, *John* 15. 19 he hath chosen them out of the world. The Church, and the World are two distinct companies ; the Church is *Cetus* *Col.* 3. 2. *evocatorum* ; therefore set not your Affections upon things beneath, but things above ; lead a spiritual Life : though ye

be in the world, live not as those that are of the world; you must not onely forsake gross Sins, but inordinate Affections to the things of this Life; your Calling is heavenly, *Let your conversation be heavenly*, Eph. 3. 20. Let your Lives be led by heavenly Laws, your comforts be heavenly comforts; your Priviledges, heavenly Priviledges. That that was *Korah's* and *Dathan's* misery, to be swallowed up of the Earth, let it not be your choice. Your hope is in Heaven, let your hearts be there also; God hath called you to enjoy himself, therefore nothing on this side God and Heaven should satisfie you.

5. God hath called you out from a state of danger, and misery, to blessedness. As *Lot* was saved from *Sodoms* Flames, so are you kept from perishing in the Flames of Hell; as *Noah* was saved from perishing in the Waters, so are you from perishing in the Deluge of God's Wrath; live as those that are Brands pluck'd out of the Fire, and Heirs of Heaven, with all joy and thankfulness.

2ly. You must let all your Service you perform to God, proceed from a right Principle; you must act by the Spirit of Christ, and the Internal Principle of Grace,

Grace, in all you do ; as you are indued with grace, as a principle of Life, so that principle of Life must be acted by the Vital quickning agency of the spirit of Christ : the Holy Spirit in Believers, is the spring and principle of their Obedience, in a sober sence ; this is called a Living in the Spirit, and a walking in the Spirit : if the Spirit hath wrought a Supernatural Life, walk in the Spirit : there is a Twofold principle of Life, *Principium quo*, & *principium quod*: *principium quo*, is Christ, and his Spirit ; As Paul saith, *I am crucified with Christ : nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.* And then, *Principium quod*, is Faith, and the Grace of Regeneration ; and the life I live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the son of God. Well then, being renewed, and assisted by the Spirit, do all by his assistance from a principle of love to God, and Faith in Christ, for acceptance.

Gal. 5. 10.

3. You must order your life onely by the rule of the Word : As God begat you by his Word, so he will build you up by it : and as it was the instrument of your effectual Vocation into the state of Grace, so he calls you to every duty by his Word ; that must be the Rule of your

life; so that you must do or suffer nothing but by the rule of the Word. Let the Precepts be the rule of your Obedience, the Promises and Threatnings the rule of your Faith; and in all things you have to do, do nothing, and especially in matters of great concernment, without Light and Warrant from the Word.

4. You must do all you do to a right end, which is to please and glorify God. Hence we are commanded to *walk worthy of the Lord to all well pleasing*, Col. 1. 10. And we are commanded, *whether we eat or drink, to do all to the glory of God*. Without this Intention of pleasing and glorifying of God, all will be rejected. *Quicquid boni fit, & non propter hoc, fit propter quod fieri debet, etsi officio videtur bonum, ipso non recto sine peccatum est*, August. Contra Julian, Cap. 3. And altho an habitual Intention be sufficient to a good Action, as an Arrow shot out of a Bow by the first intention is carried all the middle part of the way to the Mark, tho the Archer neither actually thinks of the way or end; and a man that at first setting out, intends to go to such a place, tho he doth not actually think of that place, whither he is going, every step he take; yet by vertue

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1 Cor.
10. 31.

of his first intention he cometh to that place; so an habitual intention may be sufficient to justify an action; yet the more actual intention we have in any spiritual duty, the better it is; therefore we should as much as may be, aim at a particular intention of pleasing and glorifying God, and saving our Souls in every action.

5. You must do every Action in a right manner. God hath called you unto Obedience, even the Obedience of Faith, and to obey the whole Counsel of God; thou are not outwardly called by the Word, but inwardly by the Spirit; *he hath given thee an awakened ear, Isa. 50.*
 4. Unstopt the deaf ear, given thee a spiritual, quick, ready ear, that God doth no sooner speak, but thou sayest, *Lo here I am to do thy will*, as it was with *David, Psal. 28. 8.* When God said to him, *Seek my face*; his heart presently said, *Thy face Lord will I seek*; and as the Ear is opened, so the Heart is opened, that it gives up it self in Obedience to God, as *Paul* said, *Lord what wilt thou have me to do?* And as *Paul* was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, *Acts 26. 19.* so the converted man is ready bent to do the Will of God. And

the Properties of that Obedience are these.

1. It is an inward and heart Obedience. Many outwardly do what the heart is averse from. God complains that *Judah turned not to him with the whole heart, but feignedly*, Jer. 3. 10. They made goodly Shews, and fair Simblances of returning unto God in the days of *Josiah*; yet they never thoroughly converted, or cordially turned to God; but it is the duty and property of all effectually called and converted, to obey from the heart, and with the whole heart, the will of God; that there be inward sincere Obedience from the heart, as well as outward.
- Rom. 6. 17.* Thus *Paul* witnesseth of the *Romans*, *That they were the servants of sin; but they obeyed from the heart the form of doctrine which was delivered unto them.* They were cast into the Mould of the Word, so that they had a lively Impression of the Word in their hearts, and were *Sigillum Evangelii*, the Seal and Signature of the Gospel. So do you obey from the heart; and *as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him*, Coloss. 2. 6.

2. You

2. You must obey God readily, without any further delay, disputing, or debate with your selves, as *Lazarus* called from the dead by Christ, immediately *came forth bound hand and foot*; those hands could not, and did not hinder him, *Job. 11.*

44. As *Paul* saith of himself, when it pleased God, who separated him from his Mothers Womb, who called him by his Grace, *To reveal his Son in him, that he might preach among the heathen: immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood,* Gal. 1. 16. As Christ called from Heaven, flesh and blood called him a contrary way; but he consulted not with flesh and blood, what might make for his ease and safety, but immediately obeyed; as *Matthew* the Publican, as soon as Christ called him, he left his Profit, and Imployment, and followed Christ, so must you yield a ready and speedy Obedience, *Matt. 9. 9.*

Luk. 1. 27.

3. It is a Christians Duty chearfully and willingly to obey, not only his first call to Christ, but his call from the Word in every Duty. Hence it is foretold, *his people shall be a willing people in the day of his power,* *Psal. 110.*

3. All Christs people shall be voluntary; freely and willingly offer themselves

selves unto his Service. Omnipotent Power effectually inclining their hearts, makes them freely to lift themselves under Christs Banner. They willingly present their souls and bodies as a living acceptable Sacrifice unto God, Rom. 12. 1. So must you readily with delight do the Will of God.

4. You must yield universal Obedience to the Will of God. You must not be partial in your Obedience; doing something God requires in his Word, and neglecting other things; but yield universal Obedience to the Will of God. As *Abraham*, that when God called him out of his Country, and from his Kindred, and from the Idolatry he lived in, he performed unlimited Obedience, *he went out, not knowing whither he went*, Heb. 11. 8. It is not said, not knowing with whom he went; he knew it was God called him, that he would go with him, and God could not misguide and mislead him; but he knew not whither he went; whether the place were better or worse, he knew not; but God had commanded him, and out he went; so must you yield absolute, unlimited, universal Obedience unto God in all things; not obey God in some Duties, where self-advantage, self-

self-interest or applause may lead you, but in difficult and self-denying discountenanced Duties.

5. Your Obedience must have a Word of Command, a Rule and Warrant for its ground, as *Abraham's* had; for all actions not done by Vertue of a command, God may reject with a *who hath required this at your hands?* Isa. 1. 12. And as what you do must be done in pure Obedience; you must obey for Obedience sake, because of the Authority and Sovereignty of God in commanding. When the reason of your Obedience is the command it self, this is acceptable Obedience.

6. When a mans Obedience is constant and perpetual, in all times of adversity, prosperity: *I have inclined my heart to perform thy statutes always, even unto the end,* Psal. 119. 112. when a man obeys in sincerity, with constancy, without Apostacy. *The proud have bid me in derision; yet have I not declined from thy law,* Psal. 119. 51. When God seems to cast off his people, change the course of his former kindness, and bring them into Trouble and Persecution, as it was with the Church, *Psal. 44. 17, 18. tho they suffered from God and Man, they*
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said, *All this is come upon us, yet have we not forgotten thee, neither have we dealt falsely in thy Covenant; our heart is not turned back, neither have our steps declined from thy way.*

7. When a Christian so walks and lives, that in the worst of times he can comfort himself in God, as *David* did when the people talked of stoning him; all he had was lost, his House and City burnt, his Wives carryed Captive, his Estate gone; yet then *he encouraged himself in the Lord his God*, 1 Sam. 30. 6. When a Christian unreservedly gives up himself to God, resolves not to sin, what ever it cost him, lives by Faith on Gods All-sufficiency, in the want of Friends, Relations, Maintenance; lives upon God for Supplies, Protection; takes God for his Portion, his Inheritance; *The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance*, saith *David*, Psal. 16. 5. *Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth I desire besides thee*, Psal. 78. 25. So when a Christian takes God for his Portion, 'tis all laid up in him, and God is the Center of his Love and Delight, his heart is not divided between God and the World; his hope and care is laid up in God alone. God

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is his guide and his guard, and his hope is in the life to come. He that lives thus, walks worthy of his Christian Vocation, and futable to a believing state.

sly. Altho Preaching is the standing Ordinance that God hath appointed to bring men to Salvation, which I will not now insist upon the proof of largely, but only refer you to the practice of the Levites in the Old Testament, *Who read the book of the law, gave the sence of it, and caused the people to understand the reading*, Nehem. 8. 8. And in the New we have the Practice of Christ and his Apostles for Confirmation of it; for Christ after the Lecture of the Law, had the Book given him, had found the Prophecy that spake of himself, closed the Book, and fell to Preaching a most excellent Sermon, which you shall find, *Luke 4. 16.* So that all wondered at the gracious Words that proceeded out of his mouth. Thus *Paul and Barnabas at Antioch, went into the Synagogue on the Sabbath-day, and after the reading of the law, and the Prophets, the rulers of the Synagogue sent to them, and said, Ye men and brethren, if ye have any word of Exhortation for the people, say on.* Acts 13. 14, 15. So hath

*Luke 4.
16, 17.
18, 19.
20, 21.
22, 23.*

hath God ordained the Preaching of the Word, by way of Exposition and Application to be the ordinary and principal means to beget Faith, and Repentance, and lead men on to Salvation : Thus he hath *manifested his word by Preaching*, Titus 1. 3. which was committed to Paul, and so to the Successors of the Apostles in the Office of Preaching, by the commandment of God our Saviour. And 1 Tim. 5. 17. The Elders, or the Presbyters Office is, to *labour in the word and doctrine*, and this is the standing Ordinance to beget men to the Faith ; *For faith comes by hearing*, Rom. 10. 17. Yet I speak not this to derogate from reading ; where both can be had, use both :

And in the want of the publick Ministry, be not too much discouraged, but diligently read the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, which were written by the Inspiration of the Holy Ghost : And Christ commanded the Jews, to *search the Scriptures, for in them ye hope* John 5. 39. *to have eternal life : for they are they that testify of me.* And Salvation may be had by the reading of the Scriptures. Saint *Augustine* was Converted by reading of the 13 Chapter to the *Romans* ; and *Junius* by reading of the First Chapter of the

the Gospel of St. *John*. And the *Eunuch*, by reading of *Isaiah's* Prophecy, *Isa. 53*. Yet Exposition and Preaching was joyned to it; and *what God hath joyned together, let no man put asunder*: it is a necessary duty under all Preaching; and in the want of Preaching, may be an Effectual means of Conversion: therefore be diligent in the reading of it. For,

First, these Books contain the whole Will of God, necessary to Salvation; ^{2Tim. 3. 15} 'tis the Treasury of all Divine Truth; and such things as are necessary to Salvation, are so plainly Taught, that the meanest Christian of understanding may clearly know and understand it by the Assistance of God's Spirit. The Devil ^{Psal. 19 7.} and the *Papists* will be striving to keep the Bible from you, but by no means suffer your selves to be deprived of reading the Word of God. ^{Psal. 119. 130.}

2. This Book is the most Excellent of all other books; they are therefore called the Scriptures, as if no other Book did deserve this Title but that: Whatever Excellency any other Books have, they have their worth and excellency from this. I dissuade you not from other Books, but rather advise to the use of them; but as there is no day to
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the Sabbath, so there is no book to the Bible. *Luther said, Ego odi libros meos, & saepe opto eos interire, quod metuo ne morentur lectores a lectione ipsius Scripturae.* I hate my own Books, and wish them lost, (which yet were of excellent use to the Church; and for which it stands bound to give much thanks to God :) and his reason was, because he feared the reading of them would hinder the reading of the Scriptures; and I principally advise you to a diligent reading of the Scripture, for there is the Field in which Christ, the pearl of Price, lies hid.

3. These Writings were Inspired by the Holy Ghost, *2 Tim. 3. 17. 2 Pet. 1.*

22. There is no error to be found in it, and no truth wanting, that is necessary to Salvation; whatever is needful to be believed, and practised, may be found there.

4 They contain a Wisdom far above all the Wisdom of this World, the Platform of God's Wisdom, in reconciling the World to himself by Christ, *1 Cor. 6. 7.*

5. The greatest, wisest, holiest Men that ever were, were the Penmen thereof; *Moses, David, Solomon, the Prophets, Apostles, Evangelists*, guided by the Spirit of God.

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6. No Books are so perfect, so pure, so holy, so deeply Mysterious, as these ?
Psal. 19. 7. 2 Tim. 3. 16, 17.

7. No Writings can, or do describe God so fully, so plainly.

8. No Writings do give so much Glory to God, and bring such good to Man.
Psal. 138. 2.

9. These Writings discover Sin, and teach us to subdue them, and to get power against Sin ; and is the Rule of Holiness. *Psal. 19. 8, 11.*

10. No Books do so powerfully work upon the heart *, to Convert and Sanctify it ; and no Books do afford such comfort in any Adversity. *Psal. 119. 92. Heb. 4. 12, 13.*

11. Nor are any Books so able to make us wise unto Salvation ; nor able, like these, to perfect a man for every good Word, and Work ; the Bible alone, by the use of it, is able to carry you to Heaven, if you believe and practise it, though you should never hear a Sermon more. Believe what is written, and live answerable to the heavenly Counsel in it, and fear not your coming short of Heaven. For as many as walk according to the light and rule of the word, peace shall be upon them, and the whole Israel of God. *Gal. 6. 16. 2 Tim. 3. 15, 17.*

For the New Creatures Life is ordered by
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the Word ; by which, he is infallibly guided to Heaven. *Pfal.* 119. 1, 2.

As for that wicked Opinion, and practice of the *Papists*, that would debar private Christians from reading the Scriptures ; it is so foul an Error, as carries its Confutation with it : I will not mention the Testimonies of the Fathers ; of *Chrysostome*, with what invincible Arguments he doth perswade all Men and Women of the Laity, and of the meanest capacity to read the Scripture ; Answering Objections made against it : Nor of *Theophilus* Bishop of *Antioch*, inviting *Ethnicks* and *Pagans* to the reading of the Scriptures, that they might know how to escape Hell Torments, and enjoy the happiness of Eternal Life. Nor yet the Testimonies of *Cyril of Jerusalem*, nor of *Cyril of Alexandria*, nor of *Leo*, and others of the *Roman Chair*, *Gregory*, *Zephorinus*. So that the present Opinion of the *Romanists*, is as destructive to the Salvation of Men, as any thing in the World : A Doctrine fit for none but *Satan*, or the *Pope of Rome* to maintain, That it is not Lawful, nor safe for *Laymen* to read the Scriptures. They may as well perswade us, *There is no God, or that the Sun hath no Light in it,*

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or is full of *Darkness*; as that a private Christian may not in his Mother Tongue read the Scriptures. Therefore, while you have your Bibles, be thankful; and suffer not the Dust of your Bibles from Sabbath to Sabbath, that Iye untus'd, to rise up against you that are guilty of it, to Condemn you.

ethly. Be careful to keep up, not onely secret Duties between God and your own Souls in Closet Duties, but Family Worship, the less you have of Publick Worship.

1. For your selves, let not, as a holy Person once resolved under the loss of a Pious Ministry; I say, let not the World devour God's Portion; and that time that was spent in hearing, and in attendance upon Publick Ordinances, let it not be spent upon Worldly Affairs, but in performing Religious Duties, and keeping up of Private Communion with God. Do you resolve what time you spent in attending upon Publick Ordinances, that none of that time, by a kind of prophane Sacriledge, be alienated from God, and his Service, in the pursuance of thy Worldly Calling; but Dedicate it to God in Private Devotions, till God give thee advantage with pro-

fit, to wait upon the Publick Ordinance.

2. Be careful to keep up Family Duties, in Chatechising, and Instructing them that are under thy Charge, Children, and Servants.

1. 'Tis a duty Commanded, *Deut. 6. 6, 7, 8. Prov. 22. 6. Eph. 6. 4.*

2. As to your Children, in point of Justice you owe it to them. You have been Instrumental to bring them under the Guilt, Defilement and Damnation that they lye under, by Original Sin, derived into their Natures by you; and you ought in Conscience to endeavour to bring them by Instruction, Prayers with them, and for them, into a State of Salvation.

3. As to Servants, and Children; They are as much under your Charge, as People under a publick Ministry, is under theirs; and shall their Blood be required at the hands of a Minister that neglects his Duty; and shall you be guiltless? I doubt not, but the Blood of Children, and Servants, will cry against Parents, and Masters, that suffer their Children and Servants to perish through Ignorance, and for want of giving them a holy Example; and training them up to Religious duties in your Families.

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God was pleased with *Abraham* for it, and commends his Care, *Gen* 18. 19. And if you be Heirs of *Abraham's* Faith, you will be like him in your Practice, To command your Children and Household after you to keep the way of the Lord,

4 Be strict in observation of the Sabbath; for as the Doctrine of Justification is amongst Truths to be believed, *Articulus stantis, vel cadentis Ecclesie*: So is the observation of the Sabbath, *Articulus stantis, vel cadentis sanctitatis*; and Religion thrives or withers, as the Religious Observation of the Sabbath is observed or violated. In times of Persecution, the observation of the Sabbath was so taken notice of by the *Heathens*, that it became a constant interrogatory to the Christians, in their Examinations; *Have you kept the Lords day?* To which they answered, *I cannot intermit it, for I am a Christian, and the Law of God prompts me to it.* 'Tis an evidence or denial of your Christianity, according as you carry your self in the Religious observance, or neglect of it.

7thly. Be earnest in Prayer with God, for a godly and faithful Ministry; either that you may enjoy what you lost, or some other in the room of it. Christ

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instituted this Ordinance, ordained by this means to bring men to Faith; and hath given Gifts to fit men for their Calling; to instruct the Ignorant, convince the Gainsayer; to move the Affections of the Auditors; Christ is the great Bishop of the Church; he Presents whom he will, and gives them Institution and Induction; he hath the Power to Place or displace Ministers at his Pleasure; Christ is the door by which Ministers must enter into the Church; they must have their Mission and Commission from him; they must have Letters of License, and Orders from him. *As my father sent me*, saith Christ to his Apostles, *so send I you*, John. 20. 21. *Behold, I send prophets, wise men, and scribes*, Matt. 23. 34. *I will give you pastors after mine own heart*; and in the want of them you must seek to God: Repent of your Sins, that cause Christ to remove Ministers; for if people did not sin, and provoke God to take away his Ministers, he would say, *touch not my anointed, do my prophets no harm*. And he would keep his *Jeremiah's*, that such as did Fight against them, yet they should not prevail; and Prayer prevailed for *Peters Restoration*; when the People were earnest in Prayer, God sends *Peter*

Psal. 105.
15.

to the door, having delivered him ; and it was in effect, as if he had said, You pray'd for *Peter*, and cry for *Peter* ; if you must have him, and will not be satisfied without him, take him, there he is.

2. Prile the Gospel ; for God loves to send it, and keep it where 'tis valued ; *Philadelpia* entertained the Gospel best, and had it longest.

3. And be fruitful under it, if God give it ; men use to Plow and Sow that ground often, that returns a fruitful Crop ; but when the ground is barren, and will not pay for the labour, nor quit the charges, then they let it be laid fallow ; Plow it no more, Sow it no more. But when a People are unfruitful, he deals with them, as with the *Jews* *, *Matt. 21. 13.* Takes the Gospel of the Kingdom from them, and gives it to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.

8thly. As Christ, when he was to remove from his Disciples, to comfort them for the loss of his Presence, promised to send the spirit that should lead them into all truths, and bring the truths he had taught, to remembrance, and he should be their Comforter. It was a great loss to lose Christs Ministry ; yet the Spiritual Presence of Christ could make

up the bodily loss ; go then to God, and beg of him to send his Spirit, to make up your loss, that he may bring those Truths to remembrance that are buried in Oblivion, that they may rise again, and come to fresh remembrance, and be set on by the Spirit with new life and Power ; and beg , that you may have the inward teachings of the Spirit, when you want the outward Teachings of the Word ; the Spirit is able to make up the loss of Ministers ; and more powerfully to enlighten, and perswade the heart, than they can ; and beg of God, That he would not deny his Spirit ; if Parents know how to give good Gifts to their Children, how much more will he give his Spirit to them that ask it ? Beg of God not to leave you *Orphans* ; and to send his Spirit, both to teach you, and abide in you, and with you, as a Comforter for ever.

Luke 11.
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John 14.
15, 18.

Phil. 2.16.

1 *Pet.* 3.1.

ythly. You that have found the saving benefit of Gods Word to your conversion , do you hold forth in your example the word of life, shining as lights in the World in the midst of untenewed men, that your life may preach, when your Ministers cannot ; and that they that are not won over to Religion by the Word

Word preached, may be won over to the liking and love of Religion, when they shall behold your good Conversation in Christ Jesus; this Counsel you shall find confirmed by these Scriptures, Phil. 2. 15, 16. Phil. 4. 8. 1 Pet. 2. 12. Titus 2. 13. Coll. 4. 5. Eph. 5. 15. 1 Pet. 3. 1. That you may so live,

1. Walk wisely towards them that are without, as the Apostle warns us, Coll. 4.

5. Beware of giving offence to them that are without, that may hinder their Conversion, or harden them in their Opposition against the Gospel. Do you so walk and live, that you may bring no disgrace upon the God whom you Worship, or the Religion you make Profession of, by your evil life. The Pagans of old (and so do wicked men now), when they saw wickedness committed by Christians, they opened their mouths in blasphemy against Christ. I will quote a passage out of *Salvian*, and another out of *Salvian Cyprian*, to prove this. *Salvian* in his fourth Book of the Divine Government, P. 140. complaining of the evil Lives of Christians, hath these words, *In nobis Christum patitur opprobrium, in nobis patitur lex Christiana maledictum*; In us Christ suffers a reproach, and his Go-

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2 Sim.

12. 14.

Rom. 2. 23.

1 Tim. 6. 1.

Salvian de guber.

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4. p 140.

spel is accursed ; for saith he, the Heathens say of us, *Ecce quales sunt qui Christum colunt, falsum plane illud est quod aiunt se bona discere, quod jactant se sancta legis praecepta retinere, si enim bona discerent, boni essent, talis profecto secta est quales & sectatores, hoc sunt, abque dubio quod docentur, Apparet itaque, & prophetas quos habent in puritatem docere, & Apostolos quos legunt sensisse, & Evangelia quibus imbuuntur, hoc quae ipsi faciunt predicare, postremo, sancta a Christianis fierent, si Christus sancta docuisset. Estimari itaque de cultoribus suis potest ille qui collitur, Quo modo enim bonus magister est cujus tam malos videmus esse discipulos ? — Et vide Christianos quid agunt, & evidenter potest de ipso Christo sci-ri quid doceat.*

Behold say they, What they are that Worship Christ ; that is plainly false which they say, that they learn good things, that they boast they keep the precepts of the holy Law. For if they had learnt good things, they would be good men ; such as the followers are, such is the Sect ; without doubt they are the same Persons, as they are taught. Therefore it appeareth that the Prophets which they have, taught impurity ; that the Apo-
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files which they read, had wicked Opinions, and that the Gospels with which they are instructed, did Preach what they practice. Lastly, Holy things would be done of Christians, if Christ had taught holy things; he that is worshipped, may be esteemed what he is, by his Worshippers. For how is he a good Master that hath such evil Disciples. — See the Christians what they do; and it may evidently be known of Christ himself, what he taught. And much more to this purpose, you may find there. And Cyprian doth accurately describe the Insultation of Unbelievers, and their Blasphemy they brake forth into, on the occasion of the ill Lives of Professors; in his Book *De duplici Martyrio*. *Ecce qui jactant se redemptos a tyrannide Satanae, qui predicant se mortuos mundo, nihilominus vincuntur a cupiditatibus suis, quam nos, quos dicunt adhuc teneri sub regno Satanae. Quid prodest illis Baptismus? Quid prodest illis Spiritus sanctus? Cujus arbitrio dicunt se temperari? Quare semper in ore habent Evangelium, Evangelium, cum tota vita discrepit ab Evangelii praescriptis.* — Behold they which boast they are redeemed from the Tyranny of Satan, which Preach, they are dead

*Cyprian
de cupl.
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to the World ; yet nevertheless, they are overcome by their Lust or Concupiscence, no less than we, whom they say, are held under the Kingdom of Satan. What do their Baptism profit them? What doth the holy Spirit profit them by whose will and arbitrement they say they are governed? Why have they always in their mouths the Gospel, the Gospel, when there is such a discrepancy between their lives and the Evangelical Prescripts? By both which Testimonies you may see what reproach and blasphemy is cast upon Christ and his Gospel; and what a hardning it is to others from embracing the Gospel, when the lives of Christians professing the Gospel are so Heterodox to the Christian Faith, and Heterogeneous to the Christian Religion; and as *Alexander* said to a man that bare his name, and was a Coward, *Either be valiant, or lay down the Name*: So I say, lay down the Name of Christians, or live up to your Christianity.

2. Walk therefore unblameably and harmlessly, that none may justly accuse or blame you; live with a holiness becoming the Gospel, that your lives may Preach, when a publick Soul-searching Ministry is wanting. Take heed of all injurious-

injuriousness, and cruelty, oppression; this is a foul and loathsome Conversation.

3. Live discreetly, with all due respect in your words, and in respect to time, place and persons, with whom you converse.

4. Shew forth much meekness, quietness, gentleness, and humility of mind; study all peaceableness, Heb. 12. 14. *Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see God.* Avoiding contention; rather suffering wrong, than to be quarrelous; shew a spirit easie to be intreated in case of offence taken.

5. Live soberly, so as you may not be blemished with filthiness, drunkenness, or covetousness, as men that are spotted in the World; not transported with a greedy desire and gain, willing your Neighbours should thrive and live comfortably as well as your selves; this is a very winning behaviour.

6. Live justly, observe a strict integrity and uprightness in all occasions of intercourse, matters of Traffick, Commerce and Bargaining; be true in your Words, faithful in your Promises, punctual in your performances; deal square-ly,

ly, honestly, justly, uprightly, with all men; in all things, living according to the golden Rule of Christ, *Matt. 7. 12. Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, even so do ye to them*; 'tis not so much the holiness of your lives, which often irritates the ungodly; but your conscionable performance of all the duties of the second Table, that will win unregenerate Persons; to see men profess holiness, and live dishonestly, this makes them abominate Religion; but when a Christian can come within them, beat them with their own Weapons, outshoot them in their own bow, and in the thing they profess to be good, and own for true goodness, to excel in that. The way to amaze them is to shew, that Religion frames your hearts, not only to godliness, but all true moral honesty; and in such things as they acknowledged to be good, to outstrip them both in the manner and degree, in all the duties of Meekness, Faithfulness, Justice, Mercifulness; that you do not only live without Offence; but excel in all duties of honesty of life; and not to rest, till you have made them to see that Religion hath made you to go beyond them in those things they value; and
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the Papists, in works of Mercy ; or moral honest men, in truth of Words, Promises, and Justice in their dealings ; and in quietness of disposition, or true magnanimity of spirit, that they come nothing near you ; and this, if any thing, will win them over to the liking of Religion, in which they see such lovely fruits. And thus St. Paul willeth the Wives to carry themselves with so much subjection, reverence, fear to offend ; with such modesty, chastity, *that their husbands that obey not the word, may without the word be won by conversation of the wives*, 1 Pet. 3. 1. In the like manner must we, in all holy, honest, upright walking, seek to win over others to the Christian Religion, that they seeing *our light so shine, our good works* Mat. 5. 16: so many, our life so fair, unblameable, just, and holy, may *glorifie God*, and 1 Pet. blest him for us, *in the day of their visitation* ; and if we cannot convert them, that we may put to silence the foolishness of ignorant men, that they may have their mouths stoppt, and have nothing to accuse us for, but our *good conversation in Christ Jesus*, 1 Pet. 3. 16.

I come now to the fifth and last Question, *To shew what a misery it is, to such a people that have reaped no saving benefit by the Ministry before its removal; and what they ought to do under such a loss.*

I must confess, I here want tears to bewail, and words to express the dolefulness of that peoples condition, that have reaped no benefit by the Word, before the removal of it from them. Meditate upon what hath been spoken concerning the greatness of the blessing of a Gospel Ministry; especially, where God hath effectually blessed it on others; and upon the soreness of the Judgment in the removal of it, without any saving fruit upon your hearts that have lived under it; and you may by it consider your sin and danger; and that it is high time to awake out of sleep, and to consider how near you are to a dismal Sunset of the day of Grace, and into what endless misery (if Grace in God, and Repentance in you, prevent it not) you are like to fall. Weigh what I shall write to you in the Judgment of a man; and if I speak not reason,

son, and by Scripture discover not thy State to be desperately dangerous, throw back what I say with scorn in my face; and if I do, see thou obey my counsel, and the Lord give an effectual Blessing, that the Sword of the Spirit may penetrate thy obdurate heart, and bring thee to some sight and sence of thy condition, before it be altogether too late; if thou hast not already outstood, with *Jerusalem*, the day of thy gracious Visitation, so that the things that belong to thy Peace, are like to be for ever hid from thy eyes. It is the madness of many men, to sleep away their Salvation-time, and shut their Eyes against the Light; to refuse the offers of Grace, and put away Salvation from themselves, till the day of Grace is almost past; and procrastinate their Repentance, as if they could Convert, and Repent at any time; never considering, that the means of Grace may be taken from them, or they from the means of Grace; or God may cast them into a Reprobate sence, that no Preaching shall ever prevail upon their heart for time to come. Some in Scripture are threatned with the utter loss of God's favour, if they observe not the season of Grace, *Heb. 3. 7.* Wherefore, as the

Holy Ghost saith, *To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts*; for the time will come, that he will *swear in his wrath*, such as harden their hearts *shall not enter into his rest*. And some men have lived beyond their season; as *Jerusalem* * did, the things that did belong to their peace, was hid from their eyes, because they knew not the day of their Visitation, and accepted not of Grace and Mercy in time, rejecting the Gospel, till God rejected them. *Prov. 1. 24, 28.*

ver. 11. *Because I called, and ye refused*; the time shall come, *that you shall call, and I will not answer: you shall seek me early, and shall not find me.* It is God that appoints, begins, and ends this day of Grace at his own pleasure; in some places, this day of Grace lasteth many years; in other places, the Kingdom of God is taken from them in a short time. Now that your sin and danger may the more appear to you, I will in a few Propositions lay down the sin and misery of them that are not effectually called; and the Word removed from them, before this work is done.

Luk. 19. 41, 42.

Pro. 1. 24, 28.

First, Consider, there are many persons in the world that are onely outwardly called by the Word, to Professi-

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on of Christ, that were never inwardly efficaciously called to faith in Christ, so as to take Possession of Christ; Many hear the Gospel, that are not saved by the Gospel: many hear, so as to get an outward Change, that never were acquainted with an inward saving Change; their Lives are somewhat changed, their course of life changed; but their hearts were never yet renewed; restrained they are; civilized they are; but renewed and regenerated they are not; and without Regeneration, there is no Salvation. *Joh. 3. v. 3. Many are called, but few are chosen, Mat. 20. 16.* This speaks very sad news to them, whose hearing ends in hearing, without a saving Work upon their hearts.

2ly. It is Gods ordinary Method to Call and Convert Men by the Ministry of the Word; *it pleaseth God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe, 1 Cor. 1. 21. The gospel preached is the power of God to salvation, Rom. 1. 16. And faith cometh by hearing, Rom. 10. 17* Thus the *Thessalonians* were called through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the Truth, to obtain eternal glory, by Jesus Christ; they were called by the belief of the truth, preached unto the hope of eternal glory by Christ. *Paul's Ministry* was the instrument to turn the *Gentiles* from

2 Thess. 2.

31, 14.

darkness unto light; from the power of Satan unto God, Acts 26. 18. And the Preaching of the Word is called, *the Ministration of the Spirit*, 2 Cor. 3. 8. That is, it is the Ministry, by which the Spirit is given to work all saving-Grace in the hearts of God's Elect; and in an ordinary way Salvation is not had without it. Now this speaks sadly,

1st. To the *Gentiles*, that never enjoyed the Gospel-Light, nor sat under the powerful Preaching of God's Word; they are out of the ordinary way of Salvation, swept to Hell by the Plague of Spiritual Darkness; they are led blindfold to perdition by the Prince of Darkness, towards the place of Eternal Darkness, and there is none to Rescue them out of the hand of this Destroyer.

2^{ly}. It speaks worse News to them that have had it, and slighted and neglected this great Salvation; for the *Gentiles* perish through the want of it: How much heavier will their Condemnation be, that dye for the neglect of it? The Condemnation of the *Heathen* will be far more tollerable in Hell it self, than of those that Perish under Gospel-Light. And this leads me to the Third Particular.

3ly. Their Estate is very dangerous and fearful, who have enjoyed and lived under the Light of the Gospel, and yet have not been effectually wrought upon to Conversion, before the removal of it. Hence the Author to the *Hebrews* telleth us, *That if the word spoken by Angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward; they shall not escape that do but neglect this great salvation: and much more that do despise it; which he Emphatically expresseth by this Question, How shall they escape that neglect so great salvation?* There is no possibility for them to escape great Condemnation, that neglect so great Salvation. Salvation is a thing of infinite worth, and in the least degree or manner to disrespect so precious, so needful, so useful a thing as Salvation is, is desperate folly, ingratitude, rebellion; and will lay them under great Wrath that are guilty of it. Hence Christ so severely threatens them that receive not the Gospel, but slight and neglect it; *Matt. 10. 14, 15. Whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house, and city, shake off the dust of your feet; verily I say unto you, it shall be more tollerable for the*

Land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, than for that city. God commands his Ministers not received, to shake off the dust of their feet against them, in token that they will have no Communion with them, and that God's Curse and Vengeance shall be pour'd down upon them, *Nehemiah* 5. 13. and that God would despise them, as a man doth the dust of his feet; that in the last day, the dust of the ground, where despisers of the Gospel lived, should bear Witness against them, if there were no other Witnesses: and that the condition of the *Sodomites* in Hell, should be more tollerable, than the condition of the despisers of the Gospel. Christ hath threatned *Capernaum*, that had been lifted up to Heaven, in respect of the means of Grace, that it shall be brought down to Hell; and the condition of the *Sodomites* to be more tollerable in the day of Judgment than for them, *Matth.* 11. 23. Abused means of Grace that prevail not to true Conversion, will bring men into the deeper state of Condemnation; the slighting of the offers of Grace weigh heavier in God's ballance, than the grossest sins against the Law; and is attended with heavier Wrath. And in *Luke* 10. 16.

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He that heareth you, heareth me; he that despiseth you, despiseth me; and he that despiseth me, despiseth him that sent me. The sin of despising the Word, reflects not so much upon the Minister as upon Christ, and upon God the Father; such as profit not by the Word preach'd, reject Christ, and reject God that sent him; and therefore is a hainous Transgression.

2. Consider, That if men live under the Light of the Gospel, and the Gospel be hid from them in the saving Light and Power of it, it is a fearful sign of Rejection, and Reprobation, 2 Cor. 4. 4. *If our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost, in whom the God of this world hath blinded their minds, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ should shine into them.* The Apostle Paul argued the Election of the *Thessalonians*, from this 1 *Thess.* 1. ground; because the Gospel came unto 3. them, not in Word onely, but in Power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance: and thus far we may conclude in the Negative, That as yet they have no Evidence of Election, and lye under suspition, of persons that God hath rejected.

4. Yea fourthly; If men continue long under the injoyment of a powerful Ministry, and are not effectually called by it, it is probable they are not likely to be called. Our Saviours parable of the barren Fig-tree that stood in the Vineyard, and after a competent time brought forth no Fruit; against which the owner of the Vineyard, gave charge for the cutting of it down; speaks approaching ruin to them that under the means of Grace remain unfruitful. Luk. 13. 6, 7.

A certain man had a fig-tree planted in his vineyard, and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none. Then said he to the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit, and find none: cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground? This Fig-tree was the State of the Jews, who lived in the Church, and remained barren and unfruitful in Grace, under all the Prophets Ministry, and at last under the Ministry of Christ and his Apostles; he expected they should bring forth fruit suitable to the Gospel; and because they did not answer his Expectation, he threatned their Eternal Rejection: from whence we may learn, That unfruitfulness under the Gospel, is a sin that God will

will not bear with; and in the end, they shall meet with Eternal Rejection. The like we may learn from *Heb. 6. 8.* *The earth which drinketh in the rain, that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for him that dresseth it, receiveth blessing from God. But that which beareth thorns and briars, is rejected, is nigh unto a curse, whose end is to be burned.* The scope of which place, is to shew the sad condition of Apostates, by an argument, *a minori ad majus*, from the less to the greater, under the similitude of a Husbandman. As God blesteth such men, who after pains taken with them, to make them fruitful in good works, do bring forth answerable fruit; but such as bring forth evil fruits, he curseth; so much more will he curse Apostates, who profess open Hostility against him; where we are taught that men before they are brought into the Church, are like Land unoccupied; but after they are under the Gospel, they are under Gods Husbandry; and such as bring forth fruits worthy of repentance, God blesteth them, and makes them more fruitful. That the Gospel and means of Grace, are to the Souls of men as rain, and labouring, and other husbandry

bandry to the ground, is; but such as are barren, and unfruitful under the Gospel, and bring forth bad fruit, are rejected under a curse, and their end will be to perish in Hell-Fire everlastingly. This is a dreadful state, when Ministers have spent their time and strength in Preaching, and People are as prophane as ever, as loose and vile in their Conversation as ever, as regardless of God and Grace as ever; it is a presage of eternal Ruin.

5. When others are effectually called and converted before your faces, and you remain uncalled, unconverted, this aggravates your sin, and will heighten your Condemnation; it may be some that dwelt in the same house, that did live under the same Ministry, that sat in the same seat with you, they have been inlightened, and you remain blind and ignorant; they have felt the Power of Gods Word to Conversion, and you are still in an unregenerate state; this will leave thee inexcusable under the greater Condemnation. Thus Christ aggravates the Sin and Condemnation of the *Pharisees*, that were not converted by *John's* Ministry, when Publicans and Harlots were wrought upon by it, and brought to Faith

Faith in Christ, Matt. 21. 32. *John came unto you, in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not; but the Publicans and the harlots believed him. And ye, when ye had seen it, repented not afterward, that ye might believe him. John was a holy Minister, Preaching the Doctrine of Repentance, and Faith in Christ, and neither his Life nor Doctrine moved you to repentance; but the Power of the same Truth which you heard, was manifest in the Conversion of notorious Sinners; and you saw it, and did not repent, and believe; and therefore that shall stand as a Witness against you, to aggravate your Sin and Condemnation. See how Christ urgeth the argument; these that heard the same Sermons, were Converted; Extortioners, Whores, and Harlots, were converted, and you repented not; 'tis a sad conclusion to you, that shall sit under a burning and shining light, and the Word shall melt, and humble, and convert them that lay in the same Bed, in the same Womb, at the same Board, sate in the same Pew, and leave you as dead and prophane, as if you had never heard Sermon.*

6. Consider how this will make you more inexcusable than the very *Jews, Pagans,*

Pagans, and Devils; who will rise up in Judgment and Condemn you. Give me leave to Transcribe a Passage out of one of the Sermons Preacht at the Morning Exercise at St. Giles in the Fields, whose Words are these,

The Jew may say, I had a legal Toak upon me, which neither I nor my Fathers were ever able to bear. Christ invited me into his Garden of Nuts, where I might sooner break my Teeth with the hard Shell of Ceremonies, than get to the Kernel of Gospel Promises. — The Jew may complain, that in the best of their Sacrifices, the smoak filled their Temple; smoak to make them weep for a clearer Manifestation. — We had but the old Edition of the Covenant of Grace, in a Character very darkly intelligible; you have the last Edition, with a Commentary of our Rejection, and the Worlds Reception, and the Spirits Effusion: You had all that heart could wish. — I perish eternally, may the poor Pagan say, without all possibility of Reconciliation, and have only sinned against the Covenant of Works, having never heard of a Gospel-Covenant, nor of Reconciliation by a Mediator. Alas! should I have improved my naturals to the highest, Reconciliation by Christ could
never

never have entred into my head. Oh! had I heard but one Sermon, had Christ but once broke in upon my Soul, to convince me of my undone Condition, and have shewed me a righteousness in Christ; how happy might I have been (but woe is me, I never had one offer of Christ.)

But so have I, must you say, that refuse the Gospel; I have, or might have heard thousands of Sermons; I could scarce escape hearing one or other shewing me the danger of my sin, and my necessity of Christ; but notwithstanding all I heard, I wilfully resolved, I will have nothing to do with him. I could not indure to hear strictness press'd upon me; it was all the Hell I had upon earth, that I could not sin in quiet.

Nay, may the Devil say, 'Tis true, I was ever since my fall, maliciously set against God. But alas, so soon as ever I first sinned, God kickt me out of Heaven, and told me he would never have Mercy on me. And tho I liv'd in the time of all manner of gracious Dispensations, I saw Sacrifices offered, and Christ in the flesh, and the Gospel preached; yet how could this chuse but enrage me the more, to have God, as it were, say, Look here Satan, I have provided a remedy for sin, but none for thine! This

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set me upon revenge against God, so far as I could reach him. But alas ! alas ! had God ever entred into Covenant with me at all ; had God put me upon any terms, tho never so hard, for the obtaining of Mercy ; had Christ been but once offered to me ; what do you think would I have done ? Would I have hearkned to any thing you could say, to refuse Christ and Salvation ? Could you or all the Angels in Heaven have kept me from minding Christ ? But,

Wo is me, may the Gospel-Sinner say, I have as good a Remnant of the Covenant of Works in my nature, as the Pagans have. I have all the discoveries of God in the legal Covenant, that the Jews ever had. I am under a better Dispensation than the Devils were under before their fall ; the Gospel of Grace is urged upon me ; and therefore , O poor Jew ! Whatever may be said against thy breach of Covenant, there is a thousandfold more to be said against mine. O poor Pagan ! What ever is to be said against thy breach of Covenant, there is ten thousandfold more against mine. O wretched Devils ! Whatsoever may be said against your sins , there is infinitely more to be said against mine.

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I am the most foolish, mad, wilful Rebel, that ever waged War with the great God. Thus far you hear what that Reyerend Divine saith.

This is all, and more, if more may be, applicable to the wilful Sinner, refusing to be Converted by the Gospel Grace. O poor Sinner ! your Damnation will be terrible, and yet just ; if you refuse the Gospel Grace, brought home to your doors, and suffer not your selves to be Converted by the Gospel Ministry. And indeed, This is the great Sin of this Land, contempt of the Gospel ; people are become worse than *Gadarenes*, that preferred their *Piggs* before their *Saviour* ; these prefer their Lusts, Drunkenness, and Whoredome, before Christ ; They besought him to go out of their Coasts ; These, if he will not go, will drive him out ; for he will not long stay, where such Lusts live unreformed : *for the grace of God that bringeth Salvation hath appeared, teaching us to deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts :* But when we will not be taught, savingly, but refuse to let Christ reign in our hearts, and wilfully put away Salvation from our selves, and so Judge our selves unworthy of Eternal Life ; we give a foul Evidence,

Titus 2. 12.

dence, we are none of Christs Sheep, who have all this Ear-mark, *They hear the voice of Christ, and follow him*, John 10. 27.

Object. But you will say, Do you make us all to be Reprobates that are not actually Converted by the Ministry?

Ans. No, I say not so. For first, That Seed that hath been sown, may lie a long time under the Clods, and when a soaking Rain shall come, it may spring up. When God brings a man into sore *Job 23. 16,* Affliction to awaken a man to see his *17, 18.* Guilt; and when he chastens him with sore pain upon his Bed, and his Life draws near to the Grave; God may, if he belong to him, bring the Word to remembrance, open the Ear, and seal Instruction; and so deliver him from going down into the pit; applying the Blood of Christ as a Ransom for him.

2. But if you dye in your unconverted State, you will carry with you a tearful Mark of Reprobation. If God finally take away the means from you, which is the ordinary means of Salvation, you will have cause to sit down, and weep, that

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that you have lost so fair an opportunity for the promoting your Salvation, that you may never have the like again. Let this sink down deep into your hearts.

Now if any shall by what is written, and said, be so far wrought upon, as to cry out with *Judas* to the *Pharisees*, *I have sinned in betraying innocent blood: I have sinned in betraying the innocent blood of my own soul; I will not be so churlish, as to give you so surly an Answer, as the Pharisees did to him; What is that to us? see thou to it;* but if thou see thy Error, and heartily Repent, there is Balm in *Gilead*, and Hope in *Israel* concerning this thing. If that Damned Glutton *Dives*, would have *Lazarus* to warn his Brethren on Earth, that they came not into that place of Torment, where himself was; Shall not the Minister of Christ warn and counsel you, how to escape the same danger? Would you but follow the counsel I shall give you, I would not doubt of your Salvation, though thou wert gone as far from God, almost as thou canst go, and within a little of Hell Gates. If thou wert sick of a desperate Disease, and the Physitian should tell thee, *If you will but observe what I direct you to do, I doubt not of your*

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your Cure: wouldest thou not observe it? Why, if thou wilt hearken to my counsel, I make no doubt of thy Salvation; if thou wilt shake off sloath, and set thy self for Heaven, as earnestly to seek it, as thou wouldest seek Life if thou wert ready to dye; I do not doubt of thy Recovery.

1. And in the first place, be thy Sins for Number or Nature never so many or great, if thou hast a heart willing to repent, and turn, despair not; the satisfaction of Christ is as large as the Conscience of the Sinner, or the Justice of God can require; the Promise is as free, as the Heart of the greatest Sinner can desire: the Mercy of God is as large, that the vast Ocean contains but a drop of Water in comparison to the boundless Ocean of Compassion that is in God; were all the sins that were ever committed since the World began, laid to thy Charge, and thou guilty of them all, there is satisfaction enough to the Justice of God in the Blood of Christ; Merit enough in Christ; Mercy enough in God to forgive all; and as easily can God forgive thee, as he can forgive one Sin. I speak not this to embolden any man to sin in hope of Mercy; if any do so, it is as

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black a Mark as any I know, of a man to whom God will shew no mercy. But if thou dost seriously purpose to Repent and amend; let not the neglect of thy Immortal Soul hitherto, nor the neglect of that great Salvation the Gospel hath revealed and offered; nor the indignity offered to Christ and his grace, which are sins of as Crimson a dye, as any I know, make thee despair; as Faith is amongst the Graces, the chiefest of all Graces; so is Unbelief, amongst Sins, the chiefest Sin; and Despair, the highest act of Unbelief: Despair opposeth God in his chiefest Command, and in the chiefest Attribute, in reference to the Creature, that he delights in, to magnifie; it offers the greatest disparagement to the Truth of God, and to the Blood of Christ, of any other Sin: therefore let me lay this as a Foundation; supposing thy willingness to repent and amend.

2. Be deeply sensible of your sin and danger, in that you have lived so long under the means of Grace, and God hath removed it before the Word hath had any saving Work upon your hearts: Consider what thou hast to do; thou hast a God to serve, a Soul to save, a Hell to escape and avoid, a Heaven to win,

or lose. Thou hast a blind Mind to be enlightened, a dead Soul to be enlivened and restored to life; an un sanctified Heart to be renewed, strong Corruptions to be mortified, sore Temptations to be vanquished, Self to be denyed, Pardon and Reconciliation with God to be fought, Assurance gained, and Conscience quieted; this great Controversie to be decided, whether thou shalt live in Heaven or Hell. Thou hast a powerful, subtil malicious Devil to oppose thee; a wretched World to ensnare thee; a short uncertain time to do it in. Thou hast had a day of Grace, and Gospel-Light hath shined round about thee, and a good Ministry over thee: and thou hast made little use of this great help, mispent much of thy Salvation-time, and the Ministry removed from thee; the Candle taken out of the Candlestick; neglected the fairest opportunity thou hast had to promote thy Salvation, and the Work remains upon thy hands. Thou knowest not, whether thou shalt have a Pastor after God's own heart, set over thee any longer, or any more; whether thou shalt hear another Sermon, or enjoy another Sabbath. Lord! what a miserable State is this! and what woful negligence

ligence hast thou shewed ; to sleep in Harvest, when thou should'st have provided for the dead Winter that is coming on ! I beseech you, be sensible of your Sin and danger, and heartily bewail your folly and madness, in neglecting the great work that God hath sent you into the World to do.

3. Examine your selves seriously, for what reasons God hath hid the saving-Power of the Word from you, when you did enjoy it ; and why he hath in Judgment removed it from you. And here let me tell you, that although in respect of the act of God's Will moving or inclining him to give or withhold Grace ; nothing is, or can be the cause of that, but God himself ; nothing is, or can be the cause, *Actus Dei volentis, sive Dei voluntatis*, Of the act of God's Will, or of the Will of God it self ; as Christ Witnesseth. This appeareth from our Saviour, *Luke 10. 21*. Where he ascribeth it to God's Will and Pleasure, his undeserved Election, that the wise men of this World are wholly blinded in the understanding of the Gospel ; and the despised and contemptible people should conceive and apprehend it. This is not the Object of the inquiry you

are set upon ; for this is secret, and unsearchable ; for if God should do nothing but what finite men could give a reason for, this were to make God finite, not infinite. Yet though there may not a reason be given, *actus Dei volentis* ; Of the act of God willing. Yet there may be a reason given, *rei volita*, Of the thing willed. Of the temporal Effects of Damnation, and Salvation ; blinding and hardning, inlightning, softning of Men. For that of *Aquinas* is undeniably true, *Deus vult unum propter aliud, vult hoc propter hoc, sed propter hoc non vult hoc* : God may will one thing for another, this thing for that end, but nothing but himself is the cause of his will. Now to apply this ; God Wills a mans Salvation, he Wills his Faith in order to Salvation ; 'tis true, Faith is his Gift ; yet 'tis man's Act, an Act of the freest choice and acceptance that can be ; a man comes to Christ by his own Faith, and by his own inclination ; yet this ability is from God ; and why he will give it to one, and not another, is his good will and pleasure ; to others, God denies to give the same Grace, and he seeth them wilfully blinding their own Eyes, and rejecting his Grace, and so leaves them to themselves, to procure

cure their own ruine ; hence in Scripture the whole blame of Man's non-Conversion, not Believing, not Repenting, is laid upon Man. Thus Christ telleth the Pharisees, *Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life*, John 5. 40. And Christ saith to the Inhabitants of Jerusalem : *How often would I have gathered you, as a hen gathereth her chickens, and ye would not ?* Matt. 23. 37. And Christ lays the blame upon the Pharisees themselves ; *John came in the way of righteousness, and they believed him not ; but the publicans and harlots believed him. And ye when ye had seen it, repented not that ye might believe.* Where Christ blames them for not Repenting and Believing ; *And the pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves*, Matt. 7. 30. Stephen calls the Jews, *stiff necked, and uncircumcised in heart, and ears, ye do always resist the holy Ghost*, Acts 7. 51. And Paul and Barnabas blame the Jews at Antioch, for putting away Salvation from themselves, Acts 13. 46. And God chargeth Israel with their own Death, *Cast away your transgressions, and make you a new heart, for why will ye dye, O house of Israel ?* Ezek 18. 31. Thus you see the Scripture lays the

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blame

blame of Unbelief, Impenitency, *non-Conversion*, upon men themselves. This is that I call you to, then, to search your selves about what ye have done to obstruct or hinder your Salvation; God deals with you, as with voluntary Creatures; and Conversion is an act of choice, and Faith a voluntary act of acceptance of Christ. *Religio non potest cogi, Cæsar non potest dare fidem.* So impenitency, Unbelief, is an act of Choice; and men are the causes of their own Impenitency and Unbelief. Now this is that, that I call you to search, why the Word did not work upon you to Illumination and Conversion, as well as others; and why in displeasure God hath removed the Gospel, before a work of Grace was wrought upon your hearts; for God doth not usually forsake us, till we forsake him: For as the Prophet said to *Asa*, so may I say to all in the Church baptised, professing Faith in Christ, *Hear ye me, Asa and all Judah, and Benjamin, the Lord is with you, whilst you are with him: but if ye forsake him, he will forsake you,* 2 Chron. 15. 2. God doth not forsake us, till we give him cause. Now usually there are these causes why God blesteth not the Word unto a people?

Three Reasons.

1. When

1. *Reas.* When men receive not the *Reas.* 1.
 Truth in the Light of it, but do willingly
 shut their eyes against the Light;
 as we read of them that did scoff at the
 Promise of Christs coming to Judgment;
 it did arise from a wilful ignorance; they
 did, tho instructed by Scripture, shut their
 eyes against the Light: How God made
 the World by his Word, and can a-
 gain destroy it. How he altered the
 course of Nature, when he drowned the
 World, and can do so again; and the
 Scripture hath fortold it, and therefore
 they are willingly ignorant, and God
 hath blinded them judicially, that they
 believe not, but scoff at this truth;
 and the reason why they believed not,
 was their *wilful ignorance*, 2 *Pet.* 3. 5.
 So Christ saith of the *Jews* in his days,
 in them is fulfilled the Prophecie of *Isaiab*,
 which saith, *by hearing ye shall hear,*
and not understand: seeing ye shall see,
and not perceive. For this peoples heart
 is waxed gross, and their ears are dull
 of hearing, and their eyes they have closed;
 lest at any time they should see with their
 eyes, and hear with their ears, and be
 converted, and I should heal them, *Matt.*
 13. 14. Men blind and shut their eyes, *Isa.* 6. 9:
 and then God judicially blinds them; be- *Act.* 28. 26.
 sides *Job* 12. 40.

sides the natural Ignorance and unbelief of the Gospel; there is an affected and voluntary blindness of mind, and hardness of heart, which they draw on by wilful sinning; and when they have blinded themselves, and hardened their own hearts, God judicially blinds and hardens them further; and saith, *he that is ignorant, let him be ignorant*, 1 Cor. 14. 38.

3. Reason. 2. *Reas.* Men may receive the Truth in the light of it, but they receive it not in the love of it, *and then God gives them up to strong delusions to believe a lie, that they might all be damned who believe not the truth, and have pleasure in unrighteousness*, 2 Thess. 2. 10, 11, 12. God sends his Word to the Church, and not only tenders it to their ear, but inlightens the understanding of many bad men to know it; but the wicked receive not the truth in the love of it, tho they receive it in the light of it, and so the Word proves ineffectual to them; but in them that he will save, he presents to the mind the amiable excellency of it, and the Mysteries therein contained; shews the goodness of it brought home to the Soul of every faithful and obedient receiver. *Are not my words good*
to

to him that walketh uprightly? Mich. 2.

7. The old way is the good way, and they that walk therein, find rest to their Souls, Jer. 6. 16. But such as receive it not in the love of it, the Word proves not effectual to their Conversion. Examine whether it be not so with you.

3. *Reas.* When men are enlightened by 3. *Reason.* God, but like not to retain the Knowledge of God, and go against their Light, and Imprison the Truth in unrighteousness, and forcibly detain the Truth in unrighteousness, keeping the Light under restraint, as a Prisoner that is not permitted to go abroad; so they hinder the Truth from having Dominion over their Actions; and when it is thus, God gives them up to a reprobate mind, and vile affections, to do things that are inconvenient against their Light. When men will not suffer the Light and Truth, set up in their minds, to guide them; God lets their filthy Lusts be their guides; and as they keep the Truth in Prison by disobedience; if they repent not, they shall be cast into the Prison of utter darkness, whence they shall never come out. This was the case of the *Gentiles*, under the natural Light they

verse 18. they had, *They did not like to retain God in their knowledg, and then God gave them up to a reprobate mind, to do what evil they would, Rom. 1. 28.* and do things that were inconvenient, and they were filled with all unrighteousness. They imprisoned or held the Truth in unrighteousness; and when they knew God, did not glorifie him as God, living suitable to the Knowledg they had of him; and then their foolish hearts were darkned, and he gave them up to abominable Idolatry, and corporal Adultry. And much more when the Gospel Light shines into a mans mind, and he likes not to retain it, because he cannot sin so freely as he did; therefore he imprisons the Truth, will not let the Light rule and guide him in his Actions; then God leaves him to himself, to become vile and vain, and the Word proves a favour of Death to him, if he so continue. Now examine, if your wilful ignorance shutting your eyes against the Light shining in the Word; if your understandings were enlightened, that you could not resist the Light, yet you did not receive the Light in the love of it; you tasted not the goodness of Divine Truths, and you did not like to retain this Knowledg;

ledg; but held it in unrighteousness, and would not live answerable to it, but against it; be not the true cause why the Word hath had no saving effect upon your hearts, and is in just Judgment removed from you.

4ly. If upon Examination thou shalt be so faithful and true to thy Soul, as to make a diligent search, and God shall come in with so much Light, as to discover thy self to be guilty of this sin, of thy wretched carelesness, under the means of Grace; and shall strike thy Soul with remorse for what is past, and let thee see what a sin thou hast committed in rejecting the Gospel Grace; what a danger thou hast run; How near thou art to a Curse, and a final Rejection; How just it were with God, to take thee at thy word, and refuse to give thee interest in Christ, or that Salvation thou hast despised; and if thou shalt be no longer under an indifferency in thy affection to the total removing or restoring thee again to the Gospel offers of Grace, and shalt not dally with this Conviction, nor suffer it to dye, nor trifle away such an opportunity. If thou sufferest not this new Light set up in thee once again, to be in vain, but shalt go
and

*The fourth
General
Direction:*

and humble thy Soul before God in secret, judging thy self for all thy sins; especially, for thy unthankfulness, unfruitfulness, impenitency, unbelief, and refusal of the Gospel-offers, and shalt not be light, but serious in this work, confessing thy sinfulness, that hast had Heaven and Hell so clearly opened; such plain Instructions, such powerful Persuasions, such enforcing Admonitions, which thou hast wickedly withstood; heard so many Sermons, till thou hast been weary of them; enjoyed so many Sabbaths, that thou hast prophaned them; lived not in a dark untaught Congregation, but under clear Evangelical Light; and yet art ignorant, and unreformed; and shalt seriously repent of this, and purpose to amend; fear not, as yet the day of Grace is not past with thee, whatever it be with others. Consider, that many of the elect before calling, were as bad as thou, *Manasses, Mary Magdalen, Paul*, and the *Thief* upon the Cross, and many have withstood the Offers of Grace, and yet were called at last; only take heed thou dost not abuse this, to confirm thee in sin; there is that that may fright thee from Presumption; for not all that have lived licentiously

centiously, nor all that have despised Grace, have found Mercy; but some few only, and the most have perished in their wickedness. 2ly. Of those that were saved, none were saved without amendment of Life, and Regeneration; and without it thou canst not inherit the Kingdom of God.

3tly. Possess your selves thoroughly with the necessity of Regeneration; and herein, if Christs Testimony be of any weight, he saith there is an absolute necessity for this; So Christ tells *Nicodemus*, *Verily, verily, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.* *Job. 3. 3.* Without Regeneration, there is no Salvation; he speaks it of a man indefinitely, *except a man be born again*; and this is equivalent to a universal Proposition. Every man that hopes for Salvation, must be born again, as Logicians affirm, *Propositio indefinita in Materia necessaria aequipolet de omni*; he doth not say, Except thou be't born again, but except a man; including hereby every man; and he cannot see the Kingdom of God, be in the State of Grace here, nor enter into the Kingdom of Heaven hereafter; it is not enough to be born naturally;

si Dira
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Job. 3. 3.

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ly; but we must be born a second time Spiritually.

1. Here you must know what Regeneration is. It is not as *Nicodemus* grossly and falsely imagined, a second entering into his Mothers Womb, which is needless and impossible.

2. Nor is it to have a new natural or physical Being; we need not new Bodies, nor new Souls for substance, but quality; to have Body and Soul supernaturally renewed by Grace.

3. Nor is it an external Work and change of the outward Conversation only, but an inward and powerful change of heart and life.

4. It is not to be indued with a civil moral Righteousness; this the Heathens, that never enjoyed Gospel-Light, may have.

5. Nor is it to have the common gifts of the Spirit, such as *Judas*, and the temporary Believers had; but when a man hath the special and saving Graces of the Spirit, peculiar to the Elect.

But it is, when God doth anew make us, and frame us spiritually. It is the Restauration, in some measure, of Gods Image, after which we were created, Gen. 1. 27. Ephel. 4. 24.

What Re-
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is.

It

It is a Secret, Inexpressible, Wonderful, Supernatural, Saving Work of God, peculiar to the Elect; whereby Grace is infused as a principle of New Life, whereby a man is renewed again, in part, after God's Image, resembling him in holiness; whereby a Believer is enabled to Repent of his Sins, Believe in Christ, lead a new Life, in obedience to the Will of God, and to serve him with a filial Affection, and is carried out with a Universal hatred of Sin, and love of holiness; despising the World, and all things in it, in comparison of God, and enjoyment of him in the Life to come. I could copiously and profitably prove, and confirm this by Scripture. Now every man must be thus Regenerated, because of that woful defilement that is upon man by Sin, that renders him unable to serve God here, and unfit him for the Kingdom of Heaven. Now possess your selves thoroughly with the necessity of this Grace of Regeneration; young, and old, rich and poor, profane, and evil, must all be Regenerated, if they will be saved.

8. Know it is in the power of God alone, to Regenerate you. *James 1. 18.*
Of his own will begat he us, by the word of truth.

truth. God is the Father of the New Birth; hence we are often said, to be born of God, and are called the Children of God. All the Three Persons in the Trinity have a hand in this Work, and you have them all together, in *Titus 3. 6, 7.* *By his mercy he hath saved us, (there is the Fathers Work) by the renewing of the holy Ghost, (there is the Spirits work) which he shed abundantly on us, through Christ; there is Christ's Work.* Now all false causes must be removed; we cannot Regenerate our selves, nor can any other but God. *1.* Not our selves, that were monstrous; we could not beget in us a Natural Life, much less a Spiritual; there is an utter impotency to work Grace in our own hearts. Man's Free-Will, as a Divine saith, is like *Sarah's* dead Womb. Without the Promise, and the Divine Omnipotence, *Isaac* could not be Born, nor we New-Born. He that cannot make a Fly, cannot much less make himself godly. Therefore beg of God to do it; *O Lord, create in me a new heart;* 'tis he onely can form us after his Image. *John 1. 13.* We are said to be begotten, *not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.* Not by blood, that is, saith

one,

one, in the impure way of the First-Birth; *Not of the will of the flesh*; that is, in the Carnal manner, as man begetteth man; *nor of the will of man*; by any workings of our own will. Why may not I say, *Not of blood*; by natural Generation, being descended by Blood of such Parents? 2. *Not of the will of the flesh*; our corrupt Nature contributes nothing to it. 3. *Not of the will of man*; Either, our own, or others; but wholly of God!

7thly. Consider, that the ordinary means of our Regeneration, is by the Preaching of the Word; *He begetteth us by the word of truth*. And Paul telleth the Corinthians, *I have begotten you to Jesus Christ through the gospel*, 1 Cor. 4. 15. The Law may be useful to bring us to Conviction; but it is the Gospel that is effectual to Conversion. Moses may bring us to the borders; but Joshua leadeth us into the Land of Canaan. And the word of God's grace in Christ, is the Incorruptible Seed, by which we are begotten again to a New Life: as Peter telleth us, *We are begotten again, not of corruptible seed, but by the incorruptible seed of the word of God*, 1 Pet. 1. 23. This word that begets us, is the Gospel Preached, ver. 25.

In our natural Birth, we receive the beginning of natural Life, by the Seed of our natural Parents ; but we are not by our natural Birth, born Heirs of Heaven, but children of Wrath ; and this natural Life will end in Death : but by the incorruptible Seed of the Gospel, Grace received into our hearts by Faith , we are begotten Instrumentally, and by the Spirit Internally, unto a Spiritual Life, inabled to live holily, and preserved unto Eternal Life. Hence we may see, the woful estate of all Congregations, or particular persons, that live without the word of God in the Life and Power of it ; they sit in darkness, and in the shadow of Death ; there is neither a Father to beget them, nor a Womb to bear them, nor Paps to give them suck. And where it is heard, and is not the word of Life, it will be the favour of Death. Wo to a Sinner that sits, under Gospel-light, and the Book of God is a Sealed Book to him, when it is opened to others ; that man may fear the God of this World, is suffered to blind him, that he may perish. O the depth of the Judgments of God upon Millions of wretched men, that are under the famine of the Word, and hear it not,

2 Cor 2.16

2 Cor. 4.4.

or

or if they hear it, condemn it, or get no good by it, as it is your case, to whom I am now speaking! Be sensible of this, before it be too late; and think thus, Without Grace I cannot be saved, without the Word I cannot have Grace; I had the Gospel, but felt not the power of it; I have lost it, and I know not whether God will trust me with it any more.

8thly. Beg of God by earnest prayer, the return of Gospel-light, that thou mayst once more hear the joyful sound, and have the offers of Grace again made to thee in Jesus Christ. Learn to prize the Gospel, by the want of it, which you did not prize by the Worth of it, when you were under the enjoyment of it. Famine will make a man see the necessity and want of Bread; and shall not the want of the Bread of Life, make you cry for it, as hungry men for Bread? urge your selves with the necessity of it; Without Grace I cannot be saved; and ordinarily without the Word I cannot have Grace. The Influences of the Heavens make fruitful Seasons, but yet Plowing and Sowing is necessary, and without it there is no Bread. Saving-Grace is from God, yet he conveys

his Grace by the means; therefore be not content to live, where you cannot hear the Voice of Christ. Say, what will it profit me, to gain the World, and lose my Soul? Pray therefore, as *Magnob* did, O my Lord, let the man of God which thou didst send, come again unto us, and teach us what we shall do with the child, Judges 13. 8. So pray for the Restauration of your Pastor, if God see it fit, that he may return, and teach you; or that he would send some other in his room, that may come with the fulness of the blessing of the Gospel of Christ to you. When *Israel* wanted Bread for their Bodies, they murmured, and complained to *Moses* and *Aaron*, and complained against them; yet God gave them *Manna*. How much more will he give Spiritual Food to such as earnestly seek it, and humbly pray for it? He that feeds the Ravens that cry to him, will feed the hungry Soul that cries to him for Spiritual Food. And get the Vinedressers to intercede for you. When the Husbandman threatned and commanded to cut down the barren Fig-tree; at the prayers of the Vinedresser, the Execution of the Sentence was respited, and a little longer time, and larger means granted.

Take

Rom. 15.
29.

Luke 13.
8, 9.

Take up a resolution, either to get a Gospel Ministry to you, or to go where you may enjoy it.

othly. If God should grant your prayers, and betrust you once again with a Gospel Ministry, *Receive the word with all readiness of mind*, as the men of Thessalonica did, *search the Scriptures daily, whether the things delivered were so, or no.* And finding the Doctrine taught to be agreeable to the Word, with all readiness of mind imbraced it. *Receive not the grace of God in vain, a second time;* run not the hazard of a second Excommunication from the Grace of God; but being embarked in another Evangelical Ship, when the Spirit moves in the Word, hoise up Sail, spread the Sail to the Wind, let Heaven be the Port for which you are bound; and to that end hearken to this advice:

1. Attend reverently to the Word spoken, as if the Lord from Heaven did speak to you; the Minister is Gods Messenger, Ambassador; and God doth by him speak unto you; do you receive the Word spoken and confirmed by Scripture, not as the word of man, but as the Word of God, Deut. 32. 45. *Set your hearts to all the words that I testify to you this day,*

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which

Acts 17.

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2 Cor. 6. 1.

which you shall command your children to observe; for it is not a vain thing for you for it is your life.

2. Receive not the Message for the Messengers sake, but the Messenger for his Message sake, and despise not the Treasure for the earthen Vessel that brings it, 2 Cor. 4. 7.

3. Do you glorifie and magnifie the Word of Gods Grace, Acts 13. 48. *The men of Antioch glorified Gods grace in promising Salvation to the Gentiles by the coming of Christ, and fulfilling it to them, in sending to them the glad tidings of salvation.*

4. You must not let the Word of God slip out of your minds, or flow besides you; both these are signified in that place; *Give heed to the things you have heard, lest at any time we let them slip* *.
 Lest as water that glides by us, and goes away, we shall not be the better for it; and lest it slip out of our minds, as out of a leaking Vessel, and we forget it; if a man look into a glass, and behold his face, and go away, and forget what manner of man he was, What is he the better for the glass, when he forgets the fashion of his Face, the spots in his Countenance? So a forgetful hearing of the

* Heb. 2. 2.

Jam. 1.

23, 24.

the Word, makes a weak Impression, and doth no good, when the memory is not the Ark of Divine Truths to preserve them; the heart will never be changed by the power of them.

5. You must mix the Word with Faith, or else it will be unprofitable, Heb 4. 2. *The word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it. The Gospel is the power of God to salvation, Rom. 1. 16. but it is to them that do believe.* Otherwise it becomes fruitless to the unbelieving hearer; if the chief ingredient in a potion that should make the Physick work, be left out, that Physick will do a man no good; so will the Word be not only unprofitable to the hearer, but deadly and hurtful, without Faith.

6. You must subject your consciences and reason to the Word of God, when Gods will is plainly made known. There is no rising up against the sovereignty of God; but a man must with meekness subject and captivate himself and understanding to the Word. In 2 Chron. 36. 12. it is laid as a great crime to the charge of Zedekiah, *That he did that which was evil in the sight of God, and humbled not himself before Jeremiah the prophet, speaking from the mouth of the Lord.* Be the
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Messenger a mean person, he is Gods Minister, speaking in Gods Name; and to reject the message, is not to reject the Minister alone, but God that speaks in him, and by him; to lie down under the Word in all willingness of subjection, is highly to glorifie the Lord, and his Word, whose it is.

7. You must withal possible care practice what you hear; the end of hearing is practice; you must not *only be hearers, but doers of the word*, Jam. 1. 22. and 25. ver. The promise is made to a man, if *he be not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the word*; expressing the power of the Word in his Life, in the fruits of Faith, Love, and Obedience. 'Tis this only will bring you within the compass of a blessing; otherwise, you will have the sorer Condemnation; you must not think it enough to have a good Minister, and that therefore God will bless you, as *Miscab* did, that expected God would bless him, *because he had a Levite to his priest*, Judg. 17. 13. But you must shew forth the power of the Word in your lives.

8. You must hear the word with a trembling heart, Isa. 66. 1, 2. *Heaven is Gods throne, and earth is his footstool, but to him will he look, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite spirit, that trembleth at his word,*

word. Of all men that come to hear, he that is poor in spirit, sensible of his Sin and Misery, and hath a heart broken for sin, and from sin, and that trembles at Gods Word, he is the man that God regards. There are four things call for trembling.

1. The dreadful Majesty with whom men have to do in the Word, and that is God, that hath Heaven for his Throne, and Earth for his footstool, there is no greatness, or Majesty like his; the presence of a mortal Prince, How doth it awe a man to come and stand with reverence before him; but all the Monarchs of the Earth, in all their grandure, are like so many broken potsheards, or despicable worms in comparison of him, and with him, that is King of kings, and Lord of lords, with whom thou hast to do under the Ministry of the Word.

2. Thou art under an Attainture and Accusation for High-Treason against him; thou art under Conviction; the Bill is found, and the Sentence of Death is out against thee; thou art at his Mercy, tho he hath put thee, by the Gospel, in some hope of Life.

3. According as thou beavest thy self under the preaching of the Gospel, so it is like to go with thee; the Word preacht

2 Cor. 2.
15, 16.

Is that that bindeth the Soul over to Life or Death; thy eternal Estate is to be cast by the Word, it is *the savour of life* to some; to others it is *the savour of death unto death*. According as thou behavest thy self under the offers of Grace, in the preaching of the Word, thou shalt have thy Pardon, or thy *Mittimus*, to be sent to the Prison of Hell, till the time of Execution come.

Isa. 9. 6.

4. God is at the liberty of his Will, to blind or enlighten thee under the Word; to soften or to harden thee; to work by the Word, and give thee Faith, or leave thee to thy own unbelieving heart, and leave thee in unbelief. Whom he will, he saveth, and whom he will he damneth; for all are under the Sentence of Death, and without any shew of unrighteousness. *He hath mercy on whom he will have mercy: and whom he will, he hardeneth*, Rom. 9. 18. *No man can come to Christ, except the father, which sent Christ, draw him*, Joh. 6. 44. *Of his own will he begets men by the word of truth*, Jam. 1. 18. It is Gods own good will that ingageth him to the work of Regeneration. And as David said, *he delivered me, because he delighted in me*; that was all the reason, even his own love and delight; so he delivereth a Soul

Psa. 18. 19.

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Soul from Hell, only because he will do it. *The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound of it, and knowest not whence it cometh, and whither it goeth; so is he that is born of the spirit, Joh. 3. 8.* As the Wind bloweth freely, so is the Spirit a free Agent working where, on whom, and when he will; therefore hear with trembling; and as Paul Exhorts, *Work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God that worketh in you to will and to do of his good pleasure, Phil. 2. 12, 13.* So that Paul gives a reason why we should work out our Salvation with fear and trembling; because it is not in the power of a man, without God, to work out his Salvation; for it is God that worketh a will to do any thing that is good, and ability to do it. Therefore fear to offend God, wait upon the Word preacht with fear and trembling; because your Salvation principally depends upon the good Will and Pleasure of God; wait then conscionably with holy reverence on this Ordinance; Wisdoms dore can be had no where, but at Wisdoms gates; and the lame man that had been thirty eight Year lame, did not wait at *Bethesda's* Pool in vain; he found healing at last; when Christ finds you wait-

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ing in such a measure of sincerity as you can; I doubt not but he will be ready to give an effectual blessing to your conscientious endeavours. And he hath invited you with all earnestness and seriousness, *that are weary and heavy laden, to come to him, and you shall find rest to your souls.* And he that is Truth it self hath said it, *Whosoever shall come unto me, I will in no wise cast out,* Joh. 6. 37. In which Words, if you take in the whole verse, *All that the Father giveth me, shall come unto me; and him that cometh, I will in no wise cast out.* I will take notice but of a few things in order to a Conclusion.

Mat. 11.
28.

1. That altho the Gospel be preached, and freely to all, yet all do not heartily receive and imbrace it.

Rom. 10.
16.

2. This is matter of discomfort to the Ministers and Saints, and matter of Offence, That so few to whom Christ is revealed and offered, do receive him, and believe in him. Many of the Saints may be discouraged to see it.

Rom. 10.
16.

3. That such as come not, they have reason to fear they belong not to Christ; they are not given him of the Father; this he speaketh not to terrifie them only, but make them mind their duty to come, when

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when called to embrace the Gospel-offer, and shew a willingness so to do; and doth warmly invite any that have a mind to come to him, by promising not to reject any that come.

Joh. 6.37.

4. All that are given to Christ, shall surely come to him; this Christ comforts himself and his Ministers with.

Joh. 6.37.

5. Many who slight Christs call at present, may be elect, and given to him, and shall at last come to him, and embrace him.

Joh. 6.37.

6. Tho we cannot certainly conclude the Reprobation of any man in this life (if they have not committed the unpardonable sin); yet to reject Christ offered, is a very bad sign; and such as continue in it, have cause to fear their Reprobation.

7. It is a sanctified means to fright men to Christ with the fear, that if they come not to Christ, they are none of his.

8. Such as come, may certainly hereby know their own Election.

9. It is a wonderful dignity and privileged to the Elect, that they were given to Christ by the Father from eternity, to bring them to Faith and eternal Life.

10. Conversion and coming to Christ, is a consequent of Election, not any Antecedent Cause of it.

11. It

11. It is not the frequenting of Ordinances, nor a moral change, will Evidence our Election; but our Regeneration, our Faith and coming to Christ, this will Evidence it.

12. Whosoever do come to Christ, have warrant to expect a hearty welcome to Christ, whatever they have been before; for Christ assureth them, Whosoever cometh to him, he will in no wise cast them out. This negative includes a hearty reception, that he will take them into his family; they shall by him be reconciled to God, enjoy interest in himself in all he hath, and is; all shall work together for their good. Nothing shall discommmend their Persons to God, but they shall ever remain in his Love and Favour, and never be cast off; and at Death shall enter into Heaven, to dwell with him to eternity. Consider what is written, and the Lord give you understanding in all things, 2 Tim. 2: 7.

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